Hafa Adai!

EPA awards nearly $5.7M to NMI. PAGE 3
Only 700 have applied so far for Emergency Rental Assistance. PAGE 7

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Near-drowning in Susupe

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Korean woman, who is said to be in her 40s, nearly drowned yesterday morning in Susupe, according to a source, who said the victim is now in the Saipan hospital's intensive care unit.

See SUSUPE on Page 4

DOF working to push stimulus checks out by end of next week

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig disclosed yesterday that they expect to get the $1,400 stimulus payments out by the end of next week or the first week of April.

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s request for updates on the additional stimulus payments, Atalig said they should

See DOF on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 5pm, March 25, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,789	5	7,794
Recovered	7,633	0	7,633
Active	22	5	27
Deaths	134	0	134
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			138,690

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	159	0	159
Traced via Travel Screening	123	0	123
Traced via Community Screening	36	0	36
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			9

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Saipan:	Tinian:	Rota:
Dose 1: 13,334	Dose 1: 820	Dose 1: 939
Dose 2: 10,036	Dose 2: 370	Dose 2: 511

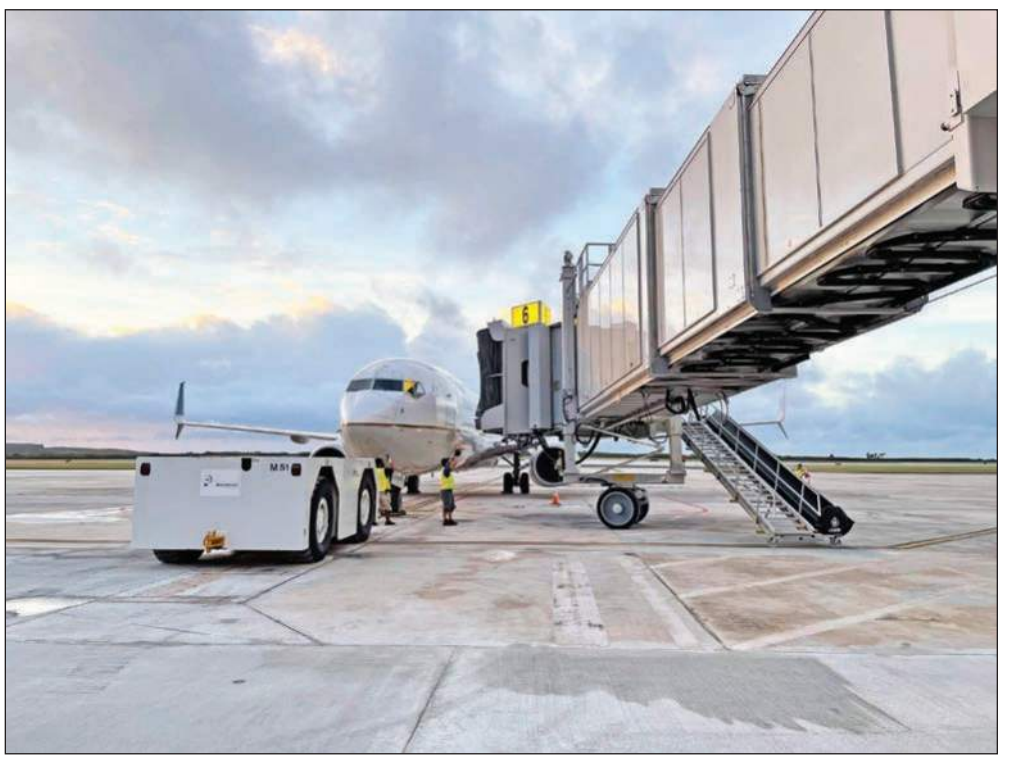
*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor



NEW LOADING BRIDGES
A United Airlines flight was the first airline to use the new passenger loading bridge at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Story on Page 5

IPI ordered to pay Pacific Rim $3M

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC last Tuesday to pay $3,016.88 to Pacific Rim Land Development, LLC no later than March 30 for attorney's fees and costs.

Manglona granted Pacific Rim's motion for sanctions and ordered IPI to pay for the new set of attorney's fees and costs associated for bringing the motion for sanctions, including the transcripts for the upcoming depositions.

On the same day, Manglona ruled that IPI violated her discovery order and is

See IPI on Page 4

CEDA's critical role in economic recovery

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By MIKE SABLAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Mike Sablan is vice president of Triple J Enterprises, Inc., a certified public accountant, chairperson of the Domestic Policy and Recovery Committee of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers.

Today, as we face the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, looking back provides some perspective for a path forward.

In 2006, amidst a global financial crisis, Kumho Asiana acquired Laolao Bay Golf & Resort from UMDA, and in three years, it completed a $60-million golfitel facility in Kagman.

In 2015, South Korean conglomerate E-Land opened its first overseas hotel development, Kensington Saipan, less than a year after Typhoon Soudelor caused widespread devastation on our islands.

Another company that has shown commitment to the CNMI through its long-term investment is Ken Corp., which has been operating Aqua Resort Club since 2004. The Japanese company is also a key regional investor, with six major hotels in Guam.

Today's pandemic crisis has certainly struck again at the core of our economy, but investors like Kumho Asiana, E-Land, and Ken Corp., who have the capability to see beyond the crises of the day, are possible and would be very encouraging for the CNMI.

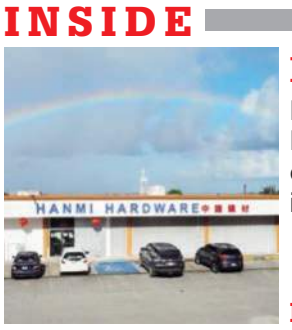
So how can we attract more legitimate investors and diversify our economy to help fast-track our recovery?

More immediate solutions include designating a lead agency that will be in charge of promoting the CNMI as an investment destination and restructuring the Commonwealth Development Authority into the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority. House Bill 22-21, which passed the House yesterday and will now head to the Senate, calls for the transformation of CDA to CEDA and gives the new agency additional tools needed to attract, retain, and expand private sector investments in the CNMI.

When it was created in 1984, the CDA was well-intentioned to "stimulate economic development" in the CNMI. However, in practice, the agency's focus on this critical mandate was distracted by other directives also placed upon

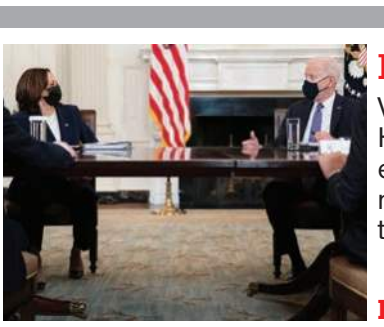
See CEDA on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS
Longtime customer David Zheng takes over Hanmi Hardware in Garapan.

PAGE 14



NATION
Vice President Kamala Harris will lead the effort to tackle the migration challenge at the border.

PAGE 15

LIFE & STYLE
Chrissy Teigen has deleted her Twitter account, saying it no longer plays a positive role in her life.

PAGE 19

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Ex-NMC cadet earns APIA scholarship

Tumaquip

Former Northern Marianas College ROTC Program cadet Dan Ryan Tumaquip was recently selected for a scholarship from the Asian Pacific Islander American Scholars program.

On the strength of his performance at NMC and in the ROTC program, Tumaquip is a scholarship recipient for the 2020-2021 school year and will compete again in 2021-2022.

"The ROTC Program helped me prepare for this scholarship by strengthening my teamwork skills and by improving my confidence," Tumaquip said. "My confidence as an individual has increased due to the number of challenges I have been put through. I know I may stumble, but with the support of my peers, instructors, family, my team, I know I can succeed."

Lt. Col. Thomas Anderson, the professor of Military Science for the Northern Marianas College and University of Guam ROTC programs, said that "Dan has an incredible future ahead of him as a serious student, leader, and, when he graduates, an Army officer. He has definitely put in the work to take charge of his future."

After achieving success as a sophomore at NMC, Tumaquip is now continuing on the path toward officership in his junior year at UOG. The APIA scholarship will help Tumaquip pay for his college courses and living expenses while away from his home on Saipan.

Tumaquip is proud to hail from the CNMI and noted that "as a future ROTC and college graduate, I hope to give back to my family and my country. Throughout my lifetime I have been blessed to be given so many opportunities to pursue my education and career. I have met so many people who have impacted my life in positive ways that I know contributed to the person I am today. I am working hard every day to become the best future officer I can be."

NMC's ROTC program is the premiere leadership development program in the CNMI, producing dynamic leaders for the CNMI, the Pacific, and the United States of America. ***(PR)***

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EPA awards nearly $5.7M to NMI

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is awarding $5,693,217 to the CNMI to support effective hazardous and solid waste management to further address impacts of 2018's Super Typhoon Yutu. Funding for this award comes from the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act.

"EPA is committed to supporting the CNMI's improvement of waste management facilities impacted by natural disasters," said acting EPA Pacific Southwest regional administrator Deborah Jordan. "Using this funding, the CNMI will make repairs to the Marpi Landfill and improve waste management resilience to minimize future damage from tropical storms."

This second round of funding is supporting multiple efforts within the CNMI and includes:

■ Completing disaster debris cleanup from Super Typhoon Yutu.

■ Increasing the capacity of the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality to conduct regulatory and outreach activities for the solid and zero waste management programs.

■ Developing a Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan that will cover the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota, and a Zero Waste Management Plan for Tinian.

■ Conducting emergency repairs to the Marpi Landfill on Saipan.

EPA will continue to work closely with the CNMI to provide technical assistance and collaborate with other federal agencies involved in recovery efforts. In early 2020, EPA awarded $10.4 million in ASADRA funding for wastewater treatment work and improvements to drinking water facilities impacted by Super Typhoon Yutu. The first award of $565,980 from the separate ASADRA hazardous and solid waste management appropriation was then given in fall 2020. EPA expects to award the remaining ASADRA funds to multiple CNMI agencies over a four-year period.

Super Typhoon Yutu—a Category 5 super typhoon—struck the CNMI in October 2018. EPA's immediate recovery work, which cost about $30 million, was authorized, and funded by Federal Emergency Management Agency-issued mission assignments in early November 2018. Work included collecting and disposing of over 31,000 units of electronic waste and hazardous waste, collecting and recycling 1,447 damaged electric transformers. ***(PR)***

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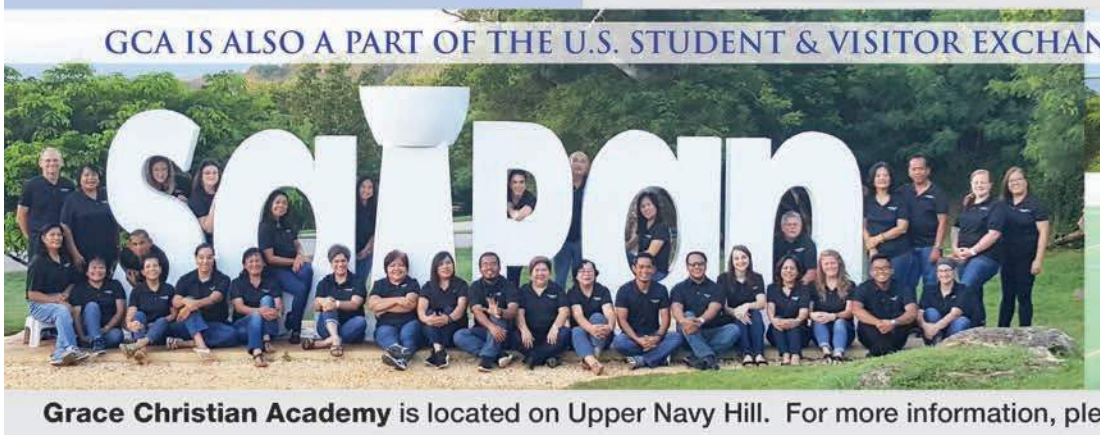


Grace Christian Academy is located on Upper Navy Hill. For more information, please call 322-3320/3850 or set up an appointment to visit the school

Ciguatera fish poisoning on the rise

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has lately seen an increase in ciguatera fish poisoning cases due to the consumption of various shallow- to deep-water bottom fish and has warned the public to avoid eating fish larger than about 4-6 lbs.

Ciguatera fish poisoning, or CFP, is a common food-borne illness related to the consumption of certain species of fish that have been contaminated with plankton (algae) derived toxin associated with coral reefs. The ciguatera toxin is non-detectable as it does not harm the fish and is unrecognizable when consumed. Unlike other food-borne illnesses, CFP is not transferred from cross-contamination due to inadequate food handler hygiene, food preparation, cooking, handling, and storage. In addition, the ciguatera toxin can withstand cooking and freezing temperatures and is not preventable if the fish species already harbors the toxin.

Common symptoms of CFP are nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle weakness, joint aches, headache, dizziness, tingling or numbness, itching, sometimes chills or sweating, dental pain, and low blood pressure. Another characteristic symptom is "hot-cold reversal," which means hot items feel cold and cold items feel hot.

According to CHCC, symptoms may appear within 15 minutes to 24 hours after consuming an infected fish. Most individuals who experience symptoms feel better in a few days to a week, but in some cases, symptoms have lasted for months and sometimes years.

Individuals experiencing symptoms of CFP are urged to seek medical attention as prompt treatment can reduce the severity of symptoms, especially those with underlying medical conditions. Individuals are also advised to immediately discard any remaining leftovers including broths.

More than 400 species of fish are associated with CFP. The most common are older, larger fish which have been eating contaminated fish during their lifespan, including—but are not restricted to—barracuda, grouper, jack, hogfish, mackerel, and snapper. There is no specific prevention except to eat fish smaller than about 4-6 lbs.

You can take the following precautions to prevent ciguatera fish poisoning:

- Avoid or limit consumption of reef fish;
- Never eat high-risk fish such as barracuda or moray eel;
- Avoid eating the parts of the fish that concentrate ciguatera toxin: liver, intestines, roe, and head.

Ciguatera toxins do not affect the texture, taste, or smell of fish, nor are they destroyed by gastric acid, cooking, smoking, freezing, canning, salting, or pickling. For more information visit: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2020/preparing-international-travelers/food-poisoning-from-marine-toxins.

Real-IDs only for US citizens, qualified aliens

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Starting Oct. 1, 2021, all U.S. citizens and qualified aliens traveling domestically—within the United States and its territories—are required to present what is called a Real-ID in order to be allowed to fly.

In line with this, the Department of Public Safety, which issues CNMI driver's licenses through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and is also the agency tasked with issuing Real-ID-compliant driver's licenses, clarified that the Real-IDs are only for U.S. citizens and qualified aliens, not for foreign workers.

Real ID cards are marked with a star at the top of the card.

According to DPS public information officer Dre Pangelinan, the fee to transfer from a typical CNMI driver's license to a Real ID-compliant driver's license is $50. Individuals are required to bring a valid passport, original social security card or 1040 tax form, permanent resident card, and a proof of residence with your name and mailing address. For those who are Federated States of Micronesia citizens, instead of a 1040 tax form, a I-94 form is accepted.

Proof of residence includes a utility bill from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., IT&E/Docomo phone bill, Medicaid card, food stamp card, bank statements, credit card statement, car registration and insurance, pay stub showing your employer's name and address, house/apartment rental agreement, or postmark mail.

As for CNMI-Only Transitiional Workers, Pangelinan said they won't be able to avail to of Real ID-compliant driver's license.

Pangelinan said if a person is departing Los Angeles, California to Houston, Texas, a person will be asked for a Real ID. However, if a person is departing Saipan to Los Angeles, California then only a valid passport is needed.

DPS announced last January 2020 that they are now capable of issuing driver's licenses that comply with the mandates of the Real ID law with the help of technology company Valid.

"By implementing the Valid Real ID solution and improving physical card security, [the] CNMI is taking steps to secure the overall process of verifying the identities of its residents and issuing secure documents," said DPS.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the CNMI will still be able to offer driver's licenses that are not Real ID-compliant for residents unable to meet the Real ID requirements. However, without a Real ID-compliant document, citizens cannot access U.S. federal government facilities or board a commercial flight.

Ada: PSS budget proposal will be submitted today

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said the Public Education System's budget proposal for fiscal year 2022 is in the process of being finalized and should be submitted to Legislature by the deadline today.

In a phone interview, Ada said that the PSS is looking to receive the same amount of local funds, which is $24,117,582, and federal funds of $34,700,000, with the total amount covering what PSS needs to be able to sustain their teachers and staff.

PSS is budgeting for 772 locally funded employees and 229 federally funded employees.

According to Accreditation Program coordinator Marian Tudela in last week's Board of Education meeting, personnel costs comprise the largest expenditure category in the general fund budget. In fiscal year 2022, PSS expects to spend $41 million in salaries and benefit costs, which is 71%of the total general fund budget.

Currently PSS has 58 Title 1 teachers and they are accepting retirees to come in and work half day.

"Once 3-foot distancing is allowed, we'll be able to bring in 15 more students in the classroom. That's a total of 25 students per classroom," said Ada.

Ada added that distance education has helped mitigate the loss of 18 PSS teachers. ***(Neil Fama)***

IPI

From Page 1

in contempt of court, again. Additionally, she found IPI in contempt of court for not complying with discovery and deposition orders in other civil lawsuits before the federal court.

Manglona also ordered IPI to provide documents no later than April 2 and granted Pacific Rim's previous petition for attorney fees and costs. She ordered IPI to pay Pacific Rim for attorney's fees and costs in the amount of $3,016.88 no later than March 30.

Pacific Rim first sued IPI for breach of contract and breach of promissory note.

On Feb. 26, the court ordered IPI to designate witnesses and appear at a deposition on Feb. 20. However, lawyer Colin Thompson, representing Pacific Rim, said that IPI failed to present witness(es) with knowledge of the topics the deposition. Thompson said that IPI's designated witnesses did little to prepare for the deposition, and IPI did not produce the documents demanded in the notice, according to a testimony last March 16.

The lawyer said the court should consider whether sanctions, including striking IPI's answer and entering a default judgment, should be imposed. Because IPI disobeyed the court's order, it should be ordered to show cause why sanctions should not be imposed, Thompson said.

Also on Tuesday, the judge ordered IPI to produce documents no later than April 2.

DOF

From Page 1

be getting the updated implementation plan from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service by the end of this week.

"Once we sign off on it, we would expect funds to be transferred to us within a week," he said.

Atalig said they had a conference call with IRS yesterday morning about this matter.

Early this month, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said that the administration is anxious to immediately release the $1,400 in additional stimulus check payment to taxpayers once the American Rescue Plan legislation is signed into law and funding is subsequently transferred to the CNMI.

President Joe Biden signed the $1.9-trillion relief bill last March 12. The American Rescue Plan extends federal unemployment assistance through August 2021, provides taxpayers with an additional $1,400 rebate, and keeps teachers and staff paid so schools remain open, among many other funding to various services and programs.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) earlier said the Rescue Plan reduces eligibility for the $1,400 rebate so no individual making more than $80,000 qualifies, a change that should have little impact in the Marianas, and excludes any increase in minimum wage.

Sablan said the estimated half-billion dollars coming to the Marianas as Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds could also be used for investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

SUSUPE

From Page 1

The source said a group of swimmers near the Guma Sakman in Susupe where the tanks are located spotted the woman with her face down in the water and noticed that she wasn't moving. The group then checked on her and realized that she wasn't breathing. Quickly, the group brought her to shore and called 911, while attempting to resuscitate the victim.

Responding paramedics rushed the woman to the Commonwealth Health Center where she is now in the intensive care unit. As of 8pm yesterday, it was learned that the woman is still in the ICU.

The source said the Korean woman is said to be in her late 30s or early 40s. Her identity has yet to be determined.

Department of Public Safety public information officer Dre Pangelinan said the woman had a pulse when she was rushed to the hospital. Pangelinan said DPS will issue more details of the incident later.

CEDA

From Page 1

it. The CDA administers commercial loan programs and facilitates small business start-ups. While these are very important, they diverted focus needed to promote the CNMI to investors on the regional and global stage.

CDA's focus on economic development was further diluted in 1994 when its board of directors was also assigned responsibility for the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. At the recommendation of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers, Executive Order 2020-21 was implemented in September 2020 to establish separate boards, allowing CDA greater focus on economic development while also enabling NMHC to concentrate more on mobilizing some $244 million in critically needed CDBG-DR funded projects.

Many government agencies have gone out of their way to promote the CNMI as a viable investment destination, but as I have mentioned in my previous column, these efforts can be better coordinated. We need a centralized agency to conduct a proactive outreach and promotion of the CNMI as a location for private investment. CEDA will do this and more.

Revisiting QC program

Included among CDA's mandates is the implementation of our Qualifying Certificate program, which offers tax incentives to attract investors.

We understand there are currently only two companies who are beneficiaries of the program, with the last QC application made in 2017. Only three applied in the last five years. Twenty years after its creation through the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, the QC program that was designed to attract investors seemed no longer attractive.

It's time to revisit this important incentive tool, evaluate its successes and shortcomings, and reassess its effectiveness given the changing dynamics and increased competition in the investor market. Through the help of the Legislature, we hope to expand the incentive packages we offer investors beyond the typical tax relief and abatements. The packages could be designed to attract targeted investors with incentives like identified public and private land parcels, expedited permit approvals, and identification of trained and locally available workers.

TOGETHER, WE CAN help bring quality investments to the CNMI to generate much-needed revenues and provide jobs to all.

As an advisory council for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, the mission of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers is to improve the quality of life in the CNMI for all residents. For more information, visit the GCEA on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy) or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

CPA replaces 3 passenger loading bridges at Saipan airport

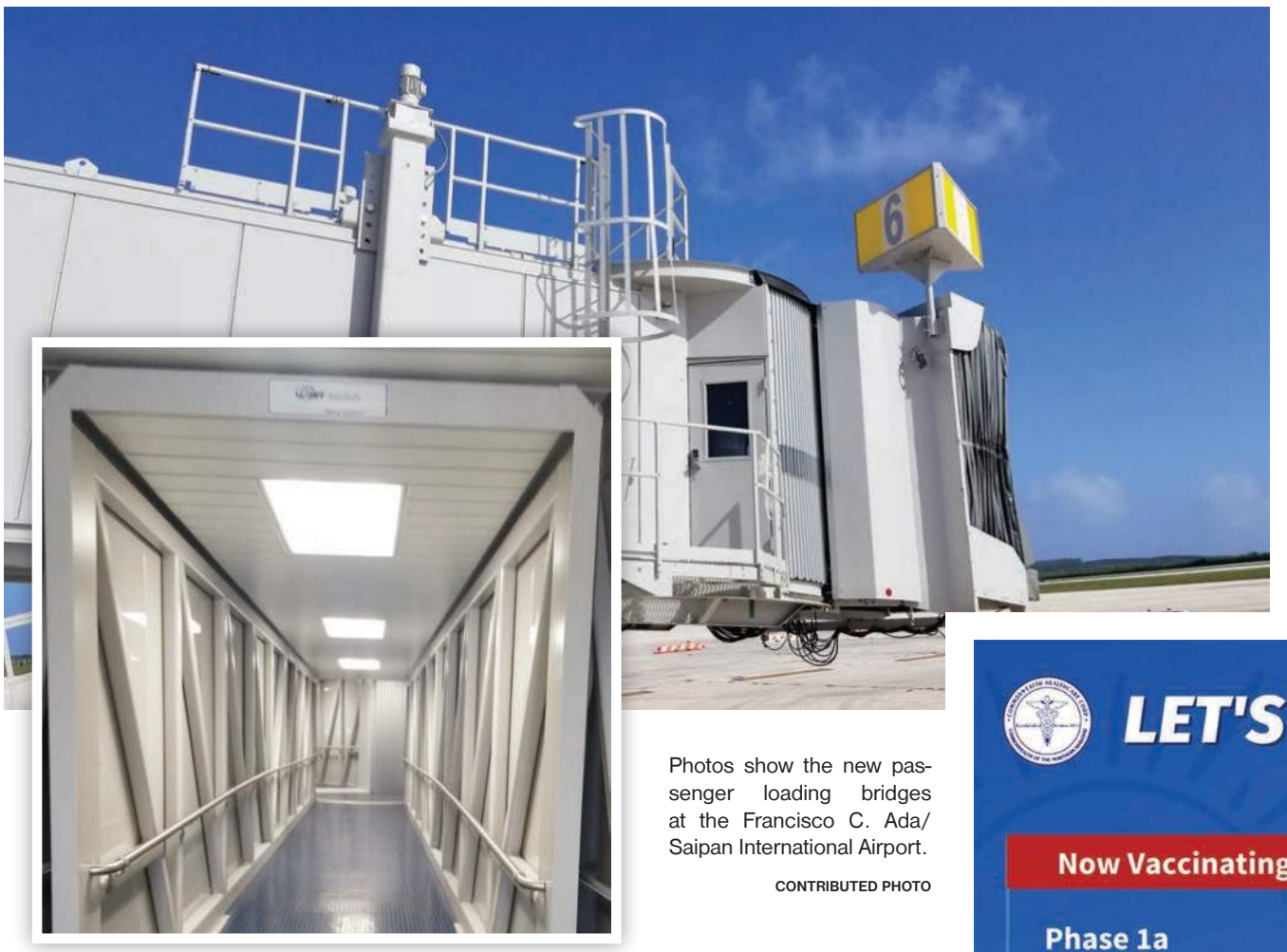
The Commonwealth Ports Authority has finally replaced three of its passenger loading bridges at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

The new bridges were installed and inspected in February 2021 and the first airline to use the bridges was United Airlines on Feb. 25, 2021.

CPA's final acceptance of these three bridges will be processed in April 2021. CPA contracted the project to AIC Marianas Inc., in January 2019.

The design package to replace the remaining three bridges is currently being finalized.

CPA appreciates the public's continued patience and understanding as it strives to bring the Saipan airport back to full operational condition. ***(PR)***



Photos show the new passenger loading bridges at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Many support Torres' NMTI appointee

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the Senate now reviewing her appointment as a board member of the Northern Marianas Technical Institute, many have come forward to express support for Ana Maria A. Mendiola's appointment.

During a live Facebook video of the public hearing for Mendiola yesterday, the Senate's Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee received several testimonies that expressed support for Mendiola's, saying she will be an asset to the NMTI board.

Committee chair Sen. Francisco Cruz (R-Tinian) said they would take a day to review Mendiola's application and act on it. Their recommendation will then go to the full Senate to approve or deny the appointment at their next session.

Speaking at the public hearing, Catherine M. Attao, who is one of the six NMTI's board of trustee member who attended the committee hearing in person, said she supports the appointment of Mendiola. "Like all new beginnings, there are some transitional challenges, but with these challenges come great opportunity. …The board of trustees are grateful for the public hearing so we could fill this vacancy that Mrs. Mendiola has been nominated to fill," she said. It was Gov. Ralph DLG Torres who made Mendiola's appointment.

Because Mendiola is a Public School System counselor, Attao said her "knowledge and network" is what the board needs, and will add "value to the board's discussions and initiatives."

"The board of trustees wants to ensure that all our islands are represented to the best of our abilities, as our only intention is to give the community the best institution of trades education we can while ensuring that all islands are represented," she said.

NMTI interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao, who also attended the hearing in person, said she also supports Mendiola's appointment. "As a passionate educator with an expansive networking Rota, I trust that she can play a pivotal role in a student's journey through life," said Jodina Attao. She added that she recognizes that not all students want to pursue a career in academia, which is why they need to further develop NMTI on Rota and Tinian.

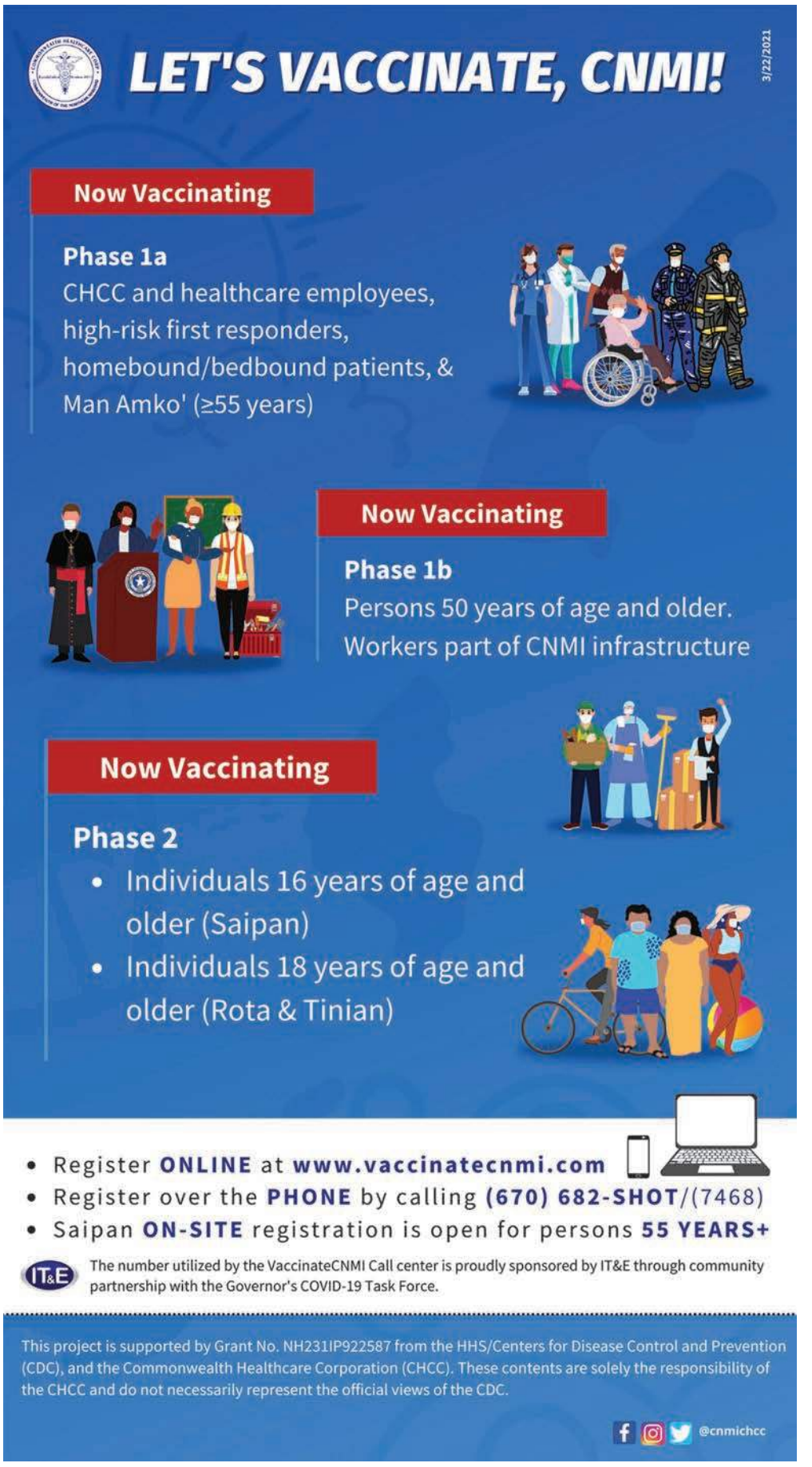
With Mendiola's network on Rota, Jodina Attao believes Mendiola's appointment to the board will be able to provide "valuable insight" to other board members.

Besides Jodina Attao and Catherine Attao, those who attended in person or gave written testimony in support of Mendiola were Christopher A. Concepcion, deputy director at Office of Planning and Development; Tan-Holdings president and chief executive officer Jerry Tan; Alex Sablan, TanHoldings Corporate Business Development vice president; Saipan Southern High School principal Vincent DelaCruz, 17th Board of Education member Antonio L Borja, and others who know Mendiola personally or through the CNMI Public School System.

Power service interruption on Monday

There will be a scheduled power service interruption on Monday, March 29, 2021, from 8:30am to 12:30pm for Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers on Chalan Hagoi in Susupe. The purpose of the scheduled power interruption is for CUC to temporarily shut-off power in order for CUC linemen to safely relocate an existing single-phase primary power pole and lines within the affected area. No water well or wastewater lift station will be affected.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***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Now Vaccinating
Phase 1b
Persons 50 years of age and older.
Workers part of CNMI infrastructure
Now Vaccinating
Phase 2
• Individuals 16 years of age and older (Saipan)
• Individuals 18 years of age and older (Rota & Tinian)
• Register ONLINE at www.vaccinatecnmi.com
• Register over the PHONE by calling (670) 682-SHOT/(7468)
• Saipan ON-SITE registration is open for persons 55 YEARS+
IT&E
The number utilized by the VaccinateCNMI Call center is proudly sponsored by IT&E through community partnership with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force.
This project is supported by Grant No. NH231IP922587 from the HHS/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC). These contents are solely the responsibility of the CHCC and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.
@cnmichcc

House unanimously passes bill that creates CEDA

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives unanimously passed yesterday a bill that will create the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority.

After agreeing to some amendments to House Bill 22-21, all 19 representatives voted "yes" to the passage of the legislation. Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) was excused from the session as she is currently in Guam for family medical referral.

After the session, Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), who is the author of the bill, thanked his colleagues for their full support. "At the end of the day, both the leadership and the minority…all agreed that the amendments were beneficial to moving this bill forward and…moving the economy of the CNMI forward," he said. "I think today is proof of that, a testimony to our willingness to move forward for the betterment of the Commonwealth."

Demapan said CEDA is a critical update to the CNMI's ability to attract, retain, and expand private sector investment in the CNMI.

The Commonwealth Development Authority's current mandate does not include a proactive outreach and promotion of the CNMI as a location for private investment. "This bill fixes this," Demapan said.

Also, under current CNMI laws, no government entity is tasked with business retention and expansion and no centralized agency is responsible for the economic development for the islands and his legislation fixes that.

Demapan

He said the creation of CEDA establishes a central authority for the pursuit of the CNMI's economic development priorities and is a step toward modernizing the way in which the CNMI economy grows.

"This is just a first step toward this effort. We have many areas to seek a dramatic readjustment to our governmental system related to economic development, but we cannot achieve the substantial goals we seek without the coordinated and proactive efforts of CEDA," Demapan said.

In offering floor amendments, Demapan recognized the inputs that have come from Reps. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), Denita K. Yangetmai (D-Saipan), and Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan).

He said they consolidated all of their amendments.

Rep. Celina Babauta commended Demapan for coming up with the bill and accepting the amendments as proposed. "This is a testimony to the people that we represent that we can consolidate and work together to pass some bills that make common sense and bring that common sense to the government," Babauta said.

All favored the floor amendments and subsequently voted "yes" to the bill's passage.

Propst joined Celina Babauta in thanking Demapan for being open and accepting their amendments.

"It really is a great feeling when we're all in unison and we all can agree and can find compromise in middle ground. So I fully support your bill. And I want to thank you for your kindness and humility," said Propst.

Yangetmai thanked Demapan for allowing them to collaborate on the bill, that according to her is very important as long it's for the good of the people of the Commonwealth.

The Governor's Council of Economic Advisers earlier recommended the transformation of CDA into CEDA. The Saipan Chamber of Commerce also touted the bill as "truly a revenue generating legislation" that will provide the tools and authority to what would become CEDA and realize new diversified investments in the CNMI.

COLLABORATION WORK
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Northern Marianas College interim president Frankie Eliptico and Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada and their teams recently met to talk about strengthening the alignment of NMC and PSS programs. From left, Tayna Belyeu-Camacho, Jackie Quitugua, Manny Castro, Frankie Eliptico, Alfred Ada, Bill Torres, and Jessica Taylor.

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Only 700 have applied so far for Emergency Rental Assistance

Aside from the $10.4 million that the CNMI had already received through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, the Commonwealth will get an additional $7.9 million for the program, according to Office of Grants Management administrator Epiphanio Cabrera Jr. yesterday.

Yet despite such a large amount of available funding, Cabrera said they have received only 700 applicants so far. Based on their calculation the rental assistance program can hold up to 1,500 clients a month.

"We only received 700-some, so we are halfway," he said.

The program aims to reduce evictions and to keep CNMI citizens in stable homes, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For now, only U.S. citizens, green card holders, and long-term residents are eligible for rental assistance.

Cabrera said the additional $7.9 million for the program is part of the American Rescue Plan's $515 million that is allocated to the CNMI. That amount will be transferred to the CNMI by May 15—60 days after President Joseph R. Biden signed it into law.

As part of the process, OGM will call the applicants whose applications have been approved to let them know "and for you to come in and to sign more documents," he said. Once the applicants sign the documents, the OGM will then inspect the applicant's home. Once the inspection is completed, then the grant specialist would review the compensation or the payment plan. After the payment plan is approved, it gets to the Department of Finance and CNMI Treasury for the issuance of the check to the landlord.

Rental payments will be made to landlords a few days after OGM inspects the applicants' house, Cabrera said.

Right now, Cabrera said, his staff are doing the first 74 applicants who are already on board. The former Pena House Boutique in Chalan Kanoa is being set up for the rental assistance program.

"That's the first full week of the review. So now it's just a matter of scheduling them to come in, the clients to come in, to do the form, then they're [going to] do the inspection," he said.

Cabrera said they are still putting their office together, hence some minor delays. "We just got our power up maybe last Thursday for the rental office down there. The phones haven't been installed yet," he said.

He said that, according to IT&E, they are trying to put in the fiber optic and will be doing the phone systems.

He said Dana Calvo, who is the grant specialist at the site, has been working hard with the staff and they're already done reviewing the batch of applicants from the first week and are now into the batches from the second week.

Cabrera said they printed over 4,000 applications and received 700.

"We understand the community is asking about the status. So in the meantime, we are still trying our best to get all the programmatic rules and regulations set. We are about 85% set with the regulations or the rules," he said.

He encouraged clients or future clients to make sure that their landlords have a business license. "We'll appreciate it if all the landlords can provide us a statement of account, like how much is past due," he said.

Cabrera said they can take the word of the client, but they also want to take the word of the business owner or the landlords. "It's only fair because it's a check and balance system. We can't just pay out cash or pay out the check to an individual claiming that we owe this much or that they owe this much without having the landlord saying anything," he said.

OGM started distributing and accepting applications last Feb. 16. They are still distributing and accepting applications at their office in Chalan Kanoa.

"We highly advise the community to be aware that staff members will be conducting inspections of their rental units," Cabrera said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

PSS wants $24M budget for FY '22

The Public School System has proposed a budget of $24.1 million for fiscal year 2022 during a Board of Education virtual meeting last Thursday.

Coupled with $34.7 million it will be getting from the federal government, PSS is looking at an operating budget of $58.8 million for the coming fiscal year.

Personnel costs comprise the largest proposed expenditure at $42 million in salaries and benefit costs, which makes up 71% of its upcoming operating budget, while $10 million has been earmarked for "all others" (school operations, utilities, debt service, repairs and maintenance, contracts, and operational reserve.

"During the last several months, we have aligned our budget proposal with the strategic objectives in funding, the needs of the school that will directly benefit the students," said PSS Accreditation Program coordinator Marian Tudela. "These objectives have helped us stay focused on our available resources and priorities for the system."

She said these investments will be especially important in the upcoming year as PSS continues to tackle hard work related to the impact of COVID-19.

In fiscal year 2021, PSS got 25% of the $96 million general fund of the CNMI government that accounted for around $24 million. ***(Neil Fama)***

Familial cluster released from quarantine

The cluster of positive COVID-19 cases that became the CNMI's first cases of community transmissions after 200-plus days has been released from the quarantine.

Governor's COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez said yesterday that the familial cluster went through the 14-day mandatory quarantine period. They were also closely monitored by health care providers.

Villagomez said a "community cluster" is a group of "close knit family," which is why they prefer the term "familial cluster." The familial cluster, according to Villagomez, was composed of 99 people in all who were identified by the contact tracing team as having had contact with the first positive cases. All in all, only 11 of these 99 tested positive for COVID-19

"But again, we are keeping all our team on high alert, making sure that enforcements are being done in the community," he said.

Villagomez encouraged businesses and the community to keep practicing the three W's, which are wearing masks, washing hand, and waiting at a distance.

As for the community-based testing, Villagomez was not able to clarify the schedule for CBT because they're still in the process of finalizing the schedule, but testing on arrival and on the fifth day are still ongoing.

According to Villagomez, the CNMI is now getting four flights every week from Guam to Saipan via United Airlines. The four days are Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Villagomez earlier said they are working to make sure that passengers on any additional United Airlines flight would be accommodated at quarantine sites. ***(Justine Nauta)***

Staffler vows to push for funding for NMTI

Rep. Leila Staffler (D-Saipan), who heads the House Committee on Education, assured the Northern Marianas Technical Institute board of trustees that the leadership of the House of Representatives will continue to look for ways to support the institute.

During the public comments portion of the NMTI board meeting last March 20, Staffler assured board members that the House will continue to push for NMTI to receive funds that will help the institution.

"As chairperson for the committee on education and workforce, I believe it is so important that we invest in institutions like NMTI so we can provide a pathway for people to become skilled workers so they can join our workforce, so they can become self-sufficient contributors to our community," said Staffler.

Additionally, she said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has "pledged a large sum of money" to support NMTI's transition. It was not immediately learned how much would be given to NMTI.

"You asked the House [of Representatives] to help you get budget authority to access money, and I assure you that I [and] Senate chair Justo S. Quitugua are circulating a joint resolution that would compel our governor to transfer CW funding to you as soon impossible. …We're planning to send it your way," said Staffler. The CW funding refers to the CNMI-Only Transitional Workers funding, which CNMI employers pay into when petitioning a foreign worker into the CNMI.

According to Staffler, Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente said the top five occupational groups in the CNMI is construction and extraction occupations, followed by installation, maintenance and repair, then building ground cleaning and maintenance, then the food preparation and service industry, and lastly, personal care and services occupations.

Benavente says this list has not changed even with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's noted that all of these occupational groups could be addressed at NMTI…and so through NMTI, we have already begun having this pathway of education and access to skilled learning and we are so grateful that this is going to continue," said Staffler. ***(Justine Nauta)***

NAVFAC Pacific awards contract for work on Camp Blaz

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM—Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Pacific awarded a $75.6 million firm-fixed-price contract Mar. 22 to Core Tech-HDCC-Kajima LLC, of Tamuning, Guam, for the design and construction of a distribution warehouse and a central issue facility at Marine Corps Base Guam.

The work to be performed provides for the design and construction of a low-rise, low-bay distribution warehouse to support the supply, food service, and medical logistics detachments with administrative, storage, inspection, packaging, and pharmacy spaces. A low-rise central issue facility will include individual issue facility, unit issue facility storage and processing areas, and a chemical biological radiological nuclear equipment storage area.

Work will be performed in Finegayan, Guam with an expected completion date of March 2024. ***(USN)***

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: Gold Ribbon Enterprises, Inc.
dba Gold Ribbon Bakeshop & Restaurant
THE POSITION: Accountant
JOB DESCRIPTION: Prepare and review monthly budget to actual variances and cash flow sources and uses of funds and ensure compliance with approved budget; Analyze daily recordings of revenue and expenditures for correct account classification in accordance with guidelines, generally accepted principles and regulatory requirements; Review all financial transactions entered in the general and subsidiary ledgers ensuring that all costs (labor, materials, overhead and costs) are completely and accurately recorded in the company's accounting system; Record daily business transactions and prepare billing statements to customers and clients; Prepares costing of products; Review and summarize business reports; Make financial recommendation to management; Responsible for budget control; Monitor and facilitate various payments to suppliers, vendors and process payments; Review and analyze monthly operating report on activities and resources in support of compiled daily revenues and expenditures, aging reports for receivables and payables and profit and loss accounts; Review and summarize business reports and all documents; Based on results of analytics review, investigates causes of variances and prepare report for management information; Prepare periodic tax filing (monthly gross receipt tax, corporate income tax return, FICA and EWR Quarterly Reports); Compute and prepare bi-weekly or semi-monthly payrolls for employees; Interact management decisions, particularly involving financial decisions to improve business operations; Monitor on a regular basis the status of inventory stocks on hand, and coordinate with chef and purchasing officer regarding propriety of actual charges; Implement strict adherence to established internal control systems and procedures; Prepare yearly financial statements (Balance Sheets and Income Statements).

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
EDUCATION: With a bachelor's degree in Accounting
EXPERIENCE: With at least 60 months of relevant work experience as an Accountant.
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Must have knowledge and experience in accounting soft wares; Must be computer-literate; and Must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
Job Site: 1st Floor, Interkam Building, Beach Road, Chalan Piao, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
How to Apply: Submit or mail resume and/or application letter to:

ROXANNE D. ARANDA-ADA, Corporate Secretary
GOLD RIBBON ENTERPRISES, INC. dba Gold Ribbon Bakeshop & Restaurant
Office Address: 1st Floor, Interkam Building, Beach Road, Chalan Piao
Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 505623, Saipan, MP 96950
Email Address: goldribbonbakeshop@gmail.com
Telephone Numbers: Tel. (670) 235-4658; (670) 287-1769

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR CNMI AIRPORTS PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-001-21

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide professional services for a CNMI-wide Airport Safety Management System (SMS) Implementation Program, Project No. CPA-SA-001-21 (AIP Pending).

The project is being funded by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and CPA. These services are in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 40-50-202: Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements shall be submitted in writing to the CPA Administration Office or emailed to Ms. Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or cpa.engr@pticom.com by no later than 5:00 p.m. (CHST), Friday, March 19, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m., TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2021.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO Date: February 24, 2021
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROGRAM FOR CNMI AIRPORTS PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-002-21

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide professional services for a CNMI-wide Airport Pavement Management System (PMP) Program, Project No. CPA-SA-002-21 (AIP Pending).

The project is being funded by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and CPA. These services are in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 40-50-202: Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements shall be submitted in writing to the CPA Administration Office or emailed to Ms. Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or cpa.engr@pticom.com by no later than 5:00 p.m. (CHST), Monday, March 22, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO Date: February 24, 2021
Executive Director

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-GOV-055

SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF AN AUTOMATIC TRANSFER SWITCH FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE, BUILDING 1326, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN MP

SUBMISSION DATE: 10:30 AM CHST, APRIL 19, 2021

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed bids for the ***Supply and Installation of an Automatic Transfer Switch for the CNMI Scholarship Office, Building 1326*** in Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available on **March 19, 2021** at the CIP Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the CNMI Scholarship Office, Building 1326 in Capitol Hill, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST April 6, 2021**. Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this ITB may be sumitted via email to Ms. Sunny Aldan at sunnyaldan.cip@gmail.com no later than **4:30 PM ChST April 12, 2021**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST, April 19, 2021**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement & Supply

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-OPD-062

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 19, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"COMPREHENSIVE INTER-ISLAND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR – OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB MAY BE MADE IN ANY MODE OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION TO **MR. A. KODEP OGUMORO-ULUDONG**, VIA E-MAIL AT kodep.uludong@opd.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, APRIL 05, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ A. KODEP OGUMORO-ULUDONG
DIRECTOR, OPD

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-OPD-063

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 19, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"TINIAN ZERO WASTE STUDY AND PILOT PROJECT FOR THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR – OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB MAY BE MADE IN ANY MODE OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION TO **MR. A. KODEP OGUMORO-ULUDONG**, VIA E-MAIL AT kodep.uludong@opd.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, APRIL 05, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ A. KODEP OGUMORO-ULUDONG
DIRECTOR, OPD

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

Developmental disability advocates honored

The CNMI University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the Northern Marianas College honored three of its current and former Consumer Advisory Committee members last March 2, 2021, at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan for their longstanding advocacy efforts.

CAC chair Emeterio Fitial, who joined the event virtually from Guam, received the coveted award that distinguishes him as the Saipan Community Advocate of the Year.

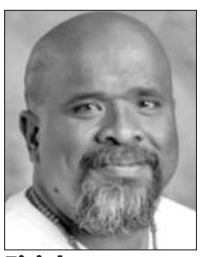
Fitial continues to be an active member of the CNMI disability network for numerous years. He currently serves as the chairperson of the UCEDD CAC, secretary of the Council on Developmental Disabilities, member of the NMPASI board, vice president of the Center for Living Independently Board, fiscal officer of the State Rehabilitation Council, and member of VOICES of the CNMI. Fitial also previously served on the Statewide Independent Living Council.

Susan Satur, former vice chairperson and current member of the CAC, was recognized as the Saipan Advocate of the Year.

Satur has dedicated her life to improving the lives of others from day one. She taught at Mt. Carmel School and Garapan Elementary School in the early years of her educational career. Later, she worked as a counselor at the Northern Marianas College. Upon retiring from the CNMI government, Satur entered the private sector and worked as a social worker assistant at Marianas Health Services. Currently, she is the executive director for the CNMI Center for Living Independently.

Satur

Diaz



Fitial

The Disability Network Partners also recognized Monika Diaz, originally from Tinian but now residing in Oregon, with both the Tinian and Saipan Self-Advocate of the Year awards.

Diaz continues to be a leader in the self-advocacy movement in the CNMI. Though she had faced many challenges, including discrimination in the workplace, instead of giving up Diaz took the high road to settle disagreements with the appropriate agencies like NMPASI. She successfully advocated for accommodation with her former employer that now paves the way for future employees with disabilities to receive reasonable accommodations. Even from afar, Diaz continues to advocate for her island of Tinian with local legislators. She is known to be active in organizing fundraising events to benefit people with developmental and other disabilities in the CNMI. Diaz is passionate about making local communities truly accessible for people with disabilities. Recently, Diaz collaborated with UCEDD and the Family to Family Health Information Center to train disability stakeholders in preparing for an emergency or disaster using the "Feeling Safe, Being Safe" curriculum. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
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Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eliceo D. Cabrera
Administrator

Janice E. Castro
Director, DCRM

AMENDED

NOTICE OF THE MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios through the Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on ***Thursday, April 8, 2021, 9:00AM*** at the BECQ 2nd Floor Conference Room, in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of all, virtual public participation is highly encouraged via video conferencing through Google Meet (https://meet.google.com/jtr-rntv-sgu) or join via telephone by calling the DCRM office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance. Google Meet access code may change. Please call DCRM for an update.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of March 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

II. PERMIT APPLICATION REVIEW

1) CRM Permit Application No. SMS-2000-X-142-A1
Project: ROUTE 35 ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
Applicant: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
The Department of Public Works is proposing to improve 0.78 mile length of Route 35 (Tun Herman Pan) Road which includes hazard elimination such as inclusion of guardrails, traffic signs, drainage improvements, and pavement rehabilitation.
- a. Agencies' Discussion
- b. Agencies' Final Determination

2) CRM Permit Application No. SMS-2021-015
Project: ROUTE 36 ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
Applicant: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
The Department of Public Works is proposing to construct road improvements along Route 36 Windward-Chalan Kalabera Road on the northeastern coast of Saipan. The proposed project will improve about 3.64 miles of the road as well as to replace two major drainage crossings, creating a continuous roadway connection with the Talofofo sector and the Marpi sector of Route 36.
- a. Agencies' Discussion
- b. Agencies' Final Determination

III. OTHER MATTERS
- 1) Adoption of Proposed Water Sports Regulations
- 2) Authorization for DCRM Director to promulgate proposed regulations

IV. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony regarding the above agenda items. (NOTE: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session).

/s/ JANICE E. CASTRO
Director, DCRM

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
JVA No. 21 – 030

Opening Date: March 23, 2021 • Closing Date: April 7, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Assistant Lineperson**
DEPARTMENT:	**Power T & D**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,742.00 to $22,602.00 per annum, Non- Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**Four (4)**

The incumbent will be under the overall supervision of the Power T&D Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of Power Division.

Duties:
- The Trades Assistant assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities.
- Servicing equipment by disassembling, assembling, cleaning and calibrating.
- Assisting with equipment/vehicle inspections.
- Servicing and preparing oil filters.
- Responding to customer calls.
- Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing obstacles.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing/Certification:
- Valid U.S. Driver's License with appropriate class;

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
JVA No. 21 – 031

Opening Date: March 23, 2021 • Closing Date: April 7, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Assistant**
DEPARTMENT:	**Wastewater Division**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,742.00 to $22,602.00 per annum, Non- Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**Five (5)**

The incumbent will be under the overall supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the Wastewater Division.

Duties:
- The Trades Assistant assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities.
- Performing daily well and pump station facility maintenance, cleaning and monitoring;
- Assisting plumbing and chlorine maintenance crew;
- Utilizing digging equipment for locating and repairing leaks;
- Repairing and securing pressure reducer valves, main valves, service lines and laterals, and booster pumps;
- Assisting with meter installation and repair;
- Collecting water samples;
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing/Certification:
- Valid U.S. Driver's License with appropriate class;

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Opinion

Hafa Adai
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Fund robust research into US gun violence

You wouldn't think a trip to a grocery store to buy strawberries could be a life-changing event. But this is America, where gun violence is an epidemic.

Sarah Moonshadow and her son were leaving King Soopers supermarket in Boulder, Colorado, on Monday when they heard gunshots. She told the Denver Post that she instructed her son to duck and then "we just ran."

As police converged on the store, Moonshadow and her son saw a body in the parking lot. "I knew we couldn't do anything for the guy," she said. "We had to go."

Ten people were killed in the shooting spree, including a Boulder police officer, and a 21-year-old from the Denver suburb of Arvada was arrested and charged. His motive, authorities said Tuesday, was not immediately clear. The Colorado mayhem followed last week's shootings that left eight people dead at three Atlanta-area massage businesses. Again, the shooter's motivations there remain under investigation.

What is disturbingly clear is that the Colorado shooting is the nation's seventh mass killing—defined as four or more people killed in one incident, not including the shooter—in 2021, according to The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University.

So what now? The victims will be mourned. The police officer will be honored for his courage. Democrats in Congress will demand action, while Republicans will push back. We've watched this all play out before, and yet the bloodshed continues.

If only our current leaders would follow the example of Mark Rosenberg and the late U.S. Rep. Jay Dickey, R-Ark.—two men on opposing sides of the gun debate who eventually teamed up to pursue a common goal: public safety. Dickey was well known for the 1996 Dickey Amendment, which prohibited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from using federal funds intended for injury prevention to advocate for gun control.

Yet he forged an unlikely friendship with Rosenberg, president emeritus of the Task Force for Global Health in Atlanta whose 20-year career at the CDC included leading the agency's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and serving as assistant surgeon general.

What the two men realized, Rosenberg told an editorial writer, is that "there are ways that you can keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them while you are protecting the rights of gun owners and reducing gun violence."

And in that spirit, in 2018 Congress passed clarifying language that retained the Dickey Amendment but said the CDC could resume research on gun violence as long as it wasn't lobbying for gun control—a key step that led to $25 million in new funding, split between the CDC and the National Institutes of Health, in 2020 and 2021.

Rosenberg said clarifying the amendment, rather than repealing it, was key to building bipartisan support. The $50 million in federal funding is a start, he added, but it's a pid-

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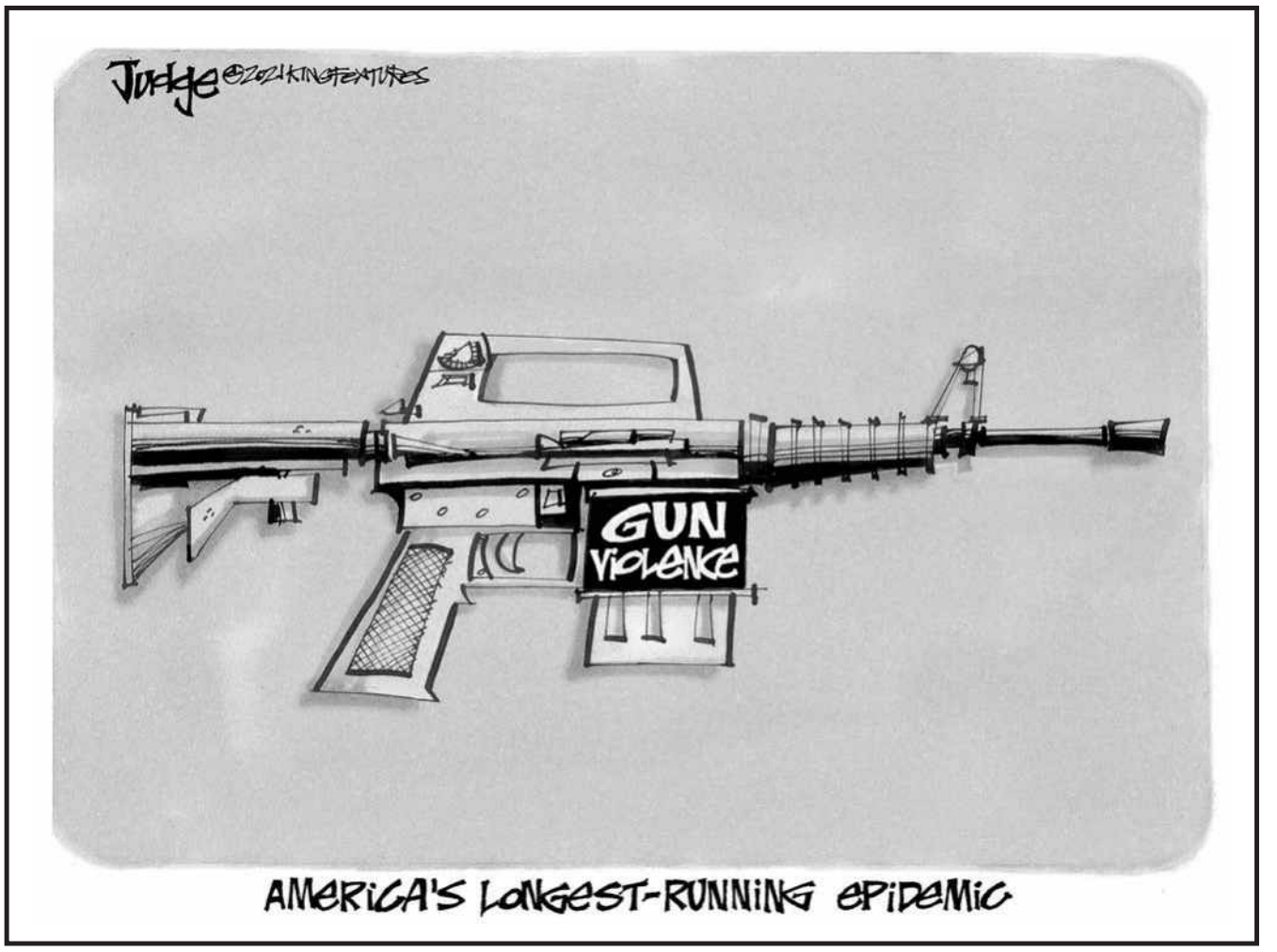

How the 'Build Back Better' plan can benefit US territories

Editor's note: The following is the author's written testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources' oversight hearing last March 24, 2021, on "How the Biden Administration's Build Back Better plan can benefit the U.S. territories." It is being published as a series due to its length.

First of a series

By RALPH DLG TORRES
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ralph DLG Torres is governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

As a nation, we have collectively realized for many years now that our infrastructure is in a critical state. This is no less true in the CNMI and, in fact, is magnified, due primarily to the decades of pre-Commonwealth neglect and lack of infrastructure development and to extreme natural and weather-related challenges to our infrastructure, and a lack of adequate funding resources. As the newest member of the US political family charged with the complete modernization of a pre-World War II infrastructure and limited resources, this challenge has been tremendous.

The "Build Back Better" initiative aligns with and is supported by "Smart, Safe Growth" planning and project implementation efforts in the CNMI. This framework has been developed in partnership with local development planning and regulatory agencies supported by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region IX Pacific Islands Office. After experiencing two 100-year super typhoons within a three-year period, we worked to develop the Guidance Manual for Smart, Safe Growth that highlights strategies to ensure the growth of communities with thriving economies and healthy environments that are resilient to natural disasters. Smart, Safe Growth uses a concept of "comprehensive planning" that emerges from the intersection of three key areas of practice—hazard mitigation, climate impact adaptation, and smart growth— each associated with its own policy guidance and best practices. "Building Back Better" as well as prioritizing wise investments in nature-based solutions such as those reflected in President Biden's "30 x 30" initiative, will help CNMI and the entire nation invest in critical infrastructure and address resource needs to ensure communities can continue to grow while withstanding current and future weather events and natural hazards with minimal physical damage or disruption.

In communities across the United States, investments have built upon centuries of development that have eased the costs required to maintain safe, adequate, and modern infrastructure networks. In the CNMI, modern development has only been witnessed in the last four decades as investment built upon a landscape torn by years of war and colonial rule. The needs, and the costs, of building a quality, modern infrastructure for the thousands of American citizens that call these islands home are not adequately represented in contrast to those of other American communities.

The state of our infrastructure directly impacts the quality of life of our residents, our economic development, and our environment. While we have made tremendous progress in the transformation of our road systems, power grids, water and sewage systems, landfills, air and sea port developments, and public transportation systems, we have not had the funding resources necessary to address the breadth of our infrastructure needs, and certainly not in a planned wholistic, sustainable, and resilient way.

Should the infrastructure and development needs of the territories, especially the CNMI, be envisioned by a national effort toward modernizing our nation's infrastructure, a holistic and multi-sectoral approach is necessary.

The history of infrastructure in the CNMI

In 1986, the CNMI inherited from the Trust Territory government a substandard infrastructure of severely dilapidated or completely unpaved roads, pre-WWII water delivery systems, an unreliable power generation system that was often offline, underdeveloped air and sea ports, and a communications system unable to meet the needs of the coming digital age. Much of our new Commonwealth's infrastructure, roads, water wells and distribution systems, and the power grid, were remnants of the pre-WWII Japanese administration and some later repairs and the paving of some thoroughfares during the post-WWII Naval administration. At the inception of the Commonwealth, the new government found itself confronted with an over 50-year old

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What is the significance of *Che'lu*?

By PETE AND EMMA PEREZ
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: The following is the authors' public statement in support of House commemorative resolution to celebrate the 10thbirthday of 47-foot indigenous Chamorro sakman named Che'lu*. The resolution was read at yesterday's session of the CNMI House of Representatives by Rep. Sheila Babauta (D-Saipan) and was unanimously passed. Construction of* Che'lu *was finished on March 25, 2011.*

It is well built and beautiful.

Its design is based on the Anson drawing of one of the last large Chamorro canoes before they disappeared for over 265 years.

It is a continuation of one of the world's most successful sailing vessel designs.

But it is much more. This canoe represents many thousands of Chamorros in many places over many years.

It represents our ancestors who designed and perfected the canoe—the people who sailed them and relied on them for thousands of years.

It represents Chamorros of the CNMI in the U.S. mainland who set out to build a genuine Chamorro voyaging canoe—the people who did the research, raised money, planned the construction, and built the canoe.

It represents the Chamorros in Guahan who welcomed *Che'lu* home to her islands and to her ocean. At the 2016 Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture in Guahan, *Che'lu* welcomed canoes from across Micronesia as the representative of Chamorros in Guahan and the Diaspora.

This canoe has a mission: to restore and strengthen traditional maritime culture in the Marianas.

Che'lu has been entrusted to us to be used to carry out her mission. She has been entrusted to us because we have the resources to do this important work. we have the facilities to maintain *Che'lu*. We have the programs to teach people to sail. We have the seafaring knowledge of our Carolinian voyages and navigators. Here in the CNMI we have Chamorros and Carolinians working together to ensure that our maritime traditions are not lost and that our youth will always have canoes in their lives.

This is the significance of this beautiful canoe. This is the opportunity this canoe represents. Recognizing the 10-year anniversary of the birth of *Che'lu* is our statement to those who have entrusted us with this canoe and with her mission that we are up to the task—that we know what this canoe represents, that we are proud to take the lead on this important work, that we will do this work proudly and out of love for our islands, for our ocean, for our culture, and for our people of the Marianas, past, present and future, wherever they live.

Pete and Emma Perez are the co-founders of nonprofit group 500 Sails, which is advocating for the revival of the CNMI's traditional maritime culture.

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dling amount compared with what the U.S. has spent on lifesaving research into issues such as car safety and heart disease.

The long drought in federal funding for gun violence research had left the nation looking for answers without adequate data. Rosenberg wants to see more research into four key areas: defining the scope of gun violence, analyzing the causes, identifying strategies to combat it and determining how to implement them.

House budget requests are due by the end of April. With the victims of the Atlanta and Boulder shootings freshly in mind, Congress should support additional funding for research that can save lives without threatening Second Amendment rights.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to DFEMS staff

Last weekend we called 911 for an emergency at our home. Paramedics Jeremy Torres and Dwayne Castro responded and, although we live on a dirt road nearly a mile and a half from any main street, they arrived in less than 20 minutes. Officers Torres and Castro resolved our problem in short order. They were efficient, competent, and gentle. Then, when we were still realizing that the crisis was over so quickly, they left—quietly, before we had a chance to say "thank you."

So we'll say it now. Gentlemen, thank you. DFEMS should be proud of you, and our community should be grateful that we can rely on professionals like you.

Bruce Mailman and Maya Kara
Capital Hill, Saipan

HOW

From Page 10

and badly degraded road, water, and power distribution infrastructure and environmentally hazardous wastewater and landfill conditions. Wastewater and road drainage systems were largely nonexistent. Air and sea ports, schools, hospitals, and other public facilities were also in significantly substandard states.

The newly formed Commonwealth set out on a course of infrastructure improvement, developing new roads and repaving roads, lighting roadways, replacing water pipes, bringing new water wells online, correcting environmentally hazardous wastewater treatment and expanding the sewer system, bringing new generators online, constructing new solid waste landfill facilities, and a myriad of other efforts to bring the infrastructure and public facilities of the CNMI's three main populated islands to a state of relative modernity.

More recently, two catastrophic tropical storms, super-typhoons Soudelor in 2015 and Yutu in 2018, had devastating effects on the infrastructure of our three major islands, destroying the power grid, damaging or completely destroying public facilities including our airports and most of our schools, and adversely affecting our newly launched public transportation service.

Today, the CNMI is applying "Smart, Safe Growth" and "Complete Streets" concepts to support prioritization, investment, and enhancement of our critical infrastructure. This multi-disciplinary approach supports long-term planning needs for people and the economy as well as our built and natural environment. This existing framework is well suited to catalyze national "Building Back Better" efforts. Similar to other territories and rural areas, historic infrastructure deployment and capacity challenges will need to be addressed to modernize critical facilities and help our community imagine and build a resilient and more sustainable future.

The state of infrastructure in the CNMI

The island of Saipan has the most developed infrastructure in the CNMI, with 82.5 miles of major roadways, the largest power generation system, the only EPA-certified RCRA compliant landfill facility, and an integrated wastewater management system. Some of this infrastructure builds upon the landmass of the island that allows for 14 wellfields throughout the island to provide water to the population. Saipan houses both the largest airport and most active seaport facilities in the CNMI that provide critical access for visitors to support our sole tourism industry and goods to be shipped in support of domestic consumption and commercial development. The CNMI's sole hospital is on Saipan that supports the needs of the CNMI population throughout the islands.

Yet, despite the capacity relative within the Northern Mariana Islands, these crucial infrastructure systems on Saipan are critically outdated, at capacity, or in need of substantial maintenance in order to maintain adequate standards equal to that of the larger United States.

Current power generation is provided by a network of electrical generators as old as the Commonwealth government itself. Within the three power plants on Saipan, only one is presently operating and doing so with the support of rented generator units procured to support the lack of capacity caused by required engine maintenance. Within Power Plant 1, the average age of the generating units is 36 years old. Maintenance on these units is delayed as the parts required to perform such maintenance requires the custom building of parts that are no longer in production at exorbitant costs.

The state of the present generators precludes the installation of large-scale renewable energy platforms as the generator speed and reliability struggles to meet the intermittent fluctuations of power generation seen in solar and wind production.

Approximately 90% of the CNMI's water supply comes from over 200 shallow wells. The low land elevation of the islands and proximity to the sea level makes it difficult to recover fresh water. Sustained dry weather and the need to over-pump to provide an adequate supply, directly affect water quality. The current water collection system and rates of ground-water production are not currently adequate for providing residents with a potable water supply. To compensate for this, most of the islands' residents and businesses supplement supply with site-built water catchment tanks and in cases standalone reverse osmosis systems.

Saipan's wastewater management is supported by two wastewater treatment plants, built in between 1960 and 1985. These plants are severely in need of repair and replacement as age and weather conditions have deteriorated their efficacy and reliability to perform the critical task of treating the wastewater produced by the CNMI's largest population center.

Since the redevelopment and reconstruction following World War II, the U.S. Navy established a dock facility to dispose of waste. This dumpsite became known as Puerto Rico dump, which was the site for municipal waste between 1953 and 2003. In 1994, EPA issued an administrative order mandating the closure of Puerto Rico dump due to several violations of the Clean Water Act. In 2003, Puerto Rico dump was officially closed and the EPA certified landfill in Marpi was opened.

The Marpi Landfill has the capacity of about one million cubic yards with the approximate lifespan of 20 to 25 years. The landfill encompasses a space of 43 acres with one transfer station and was developed at the cost of about $18.5 million.

To date, two of the six cells have been completed, however the increased demand caused by Super Typhoon Yutu has accelerated the waste stream of the developed cells, shortening the anticipated lifespan of the facility.

The Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport is the largest and highest volume airport in the CNMI. The SPN airfield is 8,700 feet long and 150 feet wide, with one parallel and eight connecting taxiways. The airfield has the aircraft capacity of the B747-400, but has supported the landing of larger aircraft such as the Antonov An-225 Mriya.

The Port of Saipan is the highest traffic seaport facility in the CNMI and is considered to be one of the CNMI's most significant economic zones. The port spans over 1,000 feet in length and can dock three large cargo vessels of 250 to 300 feet in length. The port is considered a "world-class" facility with 2,600 linear feet of berthing space, a 22-acre container yard, a water line, underground fuel distribution, and subterranean sewage removal system.

The conditions of infrastructure on the islands of Tinian and Rota are more severe, with numerous needs for the creation of critical infrastructure where none exists.

On both Tinian and Rota the populations do not have an integrated wastewater system, and do not have a wastewater treatment facility. Much of the wastewater is managed by septic systems in a decentralized management system, that increases risk to the islands' underground aquifer.

Neither Tinian nor Rota have an EPA-approved landfill site, and present solid waste is managed by a surface waste dump.

The present, Tinian landfill is an open dump site of approximately 20 thousand cubic yards. The landfill is currently in violation of regulations by the EPA and CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) and, at current flow of solid waste, is estimated to meet capacity in coming years.

Similar to Tinian, solid waste in Rota is received by an open dump of approximately 20 thousand cubic yards and is in violation of EPA and BECQ regulatory requirements.

On Tinian, the only active source for freshwater is the Maui II horizontal well, skimmed from the Marpo swamp that is charged by rainfall. The Marpo swamp wetland area is exposed basal lens groundwater. This present system presents challenges to the construction and development of the newly approved U.S. Airforce divert airfield, which is presently working toward construction on the Tinian International Airport.

Most of the island of Rota's freshwater comes from two water caves within the Sabana region. These caves are nestled between limestone rocks and low-permeability volcanic rocks. The two caves are known as the Main Cave located at 1,150 feet above sea level and the other, Onan Spring at the same elevation.

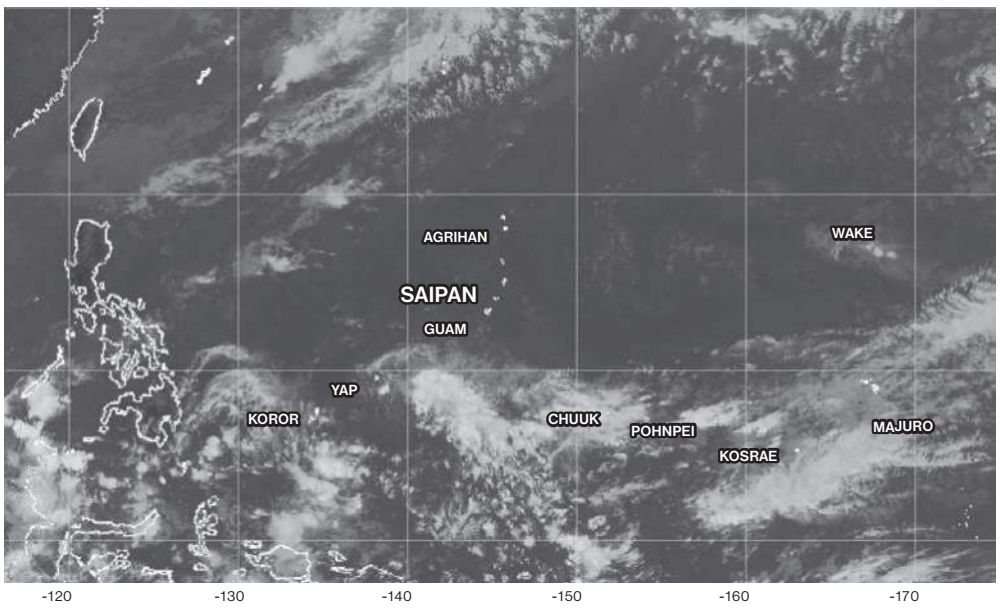
To be continued

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:13 AM, THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Visible satellite shows partly cloudy skies and isolated showers over the Marianas waters. These relatively dry conditions extend eastward to 164E. The buoys reveal combined seas of 5 to 7 feet, composed of a northwest swell, an east-northeast swell, and wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Clear	87 | 78 °F
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	86 | 76 °F
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	84 | 71 °F
Chuuk	Overcast	85 | 79 °F
Pohnpei	Overcast	82 | 78 °F
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	85 | 80 °F
Majuro	Overcast	85 | 80 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:17 AM	6:28 PM
Saturday	6:16 AM	6:28 PM
Sunday	6:15 AM	6:28 PM
Monday	6:14 AM	6:29 PM
Tuesday	6:14 AM	6:29 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	4:17 AM	4:06 PM
Saturday	-	5:03 AM	5:04 PM
Sunday	-	5:48 AM	6:03 PM
Monday	-	6:32 AM	7:02 PM
Tuesday	-	7:17 AM	8:02 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Clear	73 | 58 °F
Beijing	Overcast	50 | 35 °F
Hong Kong	Scattered Clouds	76 | 68 °F
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	84 | 70 °F
London	Mostly Cloudy	55 | 43 °F
Los Angeles	Clear	66 | 51 °F
Manila	Clear	93 | 78 °F
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	75 | 54 °F
Miami	Clear	79 | 68 °F
New York	Clear	43 | 34 °F
Osaka	Overcast	55 | 41 °F
Paris	Clear	59 | 39 °F
Pusan	Clear	62 | 36 °F
Rome	Scattered Clouds	64 | 47 °F
Salem	Scattered Clouds	55 | 40 °F
San Francisco	Clear	61 | 49 °F
Seoul	Haze	57 | 31 °F
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	56 | 40 °F
Washington, DC	Clear	48 | 34 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
6:45 AM	High Tide	1.81
12:20 PM	Low Tide	0.97
5:31 PM	High Tide	1.77
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 5, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 5, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1, 5 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 5, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Guam governor testifies on building Guam back better

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—Late Wednesday, Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero presented testimony to the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee on the Biden-Harris Administration's "Build Back Better" plan—a comprehensive economic and infrastructure plan for the future—and what it means for Guam and the specific needs of the island's people and its future development.

In her appeal to committee chair Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva and vice chair Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan, she expressed support for Biden's vision of rebuilding communities like Guam "with infrastructure that creates a foundation for economic growth and equity for the disadvantaged, combats climate change, supports environmental justice, helps lift families out of poverty, and improves the lives of working people."

In addition to ongoing efforts to protect the health and economic livelihood of Guam and its people, Leon Guerrero spoke to the issues of climate change, environmental justice, and creating a circular economy that manages the island's waste. She detailed Guam's Zero Waste Working Group's efforts and the Guam Green Growth (G3) Initiative. Continuing the theme of state-like treatment, she called for the full Sea Grant status for the University of Guam.

Leon Guerrero

Leon Guerrero also called for extending Supplemental Security Income eligibility to Guam and called attention to the urgent public health effects of climate change and plans for a new Guam Memorial Hospital. She also argued for establishing a Regional Veterans Affairs office in Guam and further reiterated her intent to apply for a substantially underserved trust area grant to develop Chamorro Land Trust Commission properties.

As part of her economic recovery plan, she called for a reexamination of federal highway funds for territories to support infrastructure redevelopment, state designation treatment for Guam's Small Business Administration and U.S. Department of Agriculture offices to directly elevate the needs of local small businesses and farmers, and an expedient federal approval process for H-2 workers to support private sector development.

To view the hearing in its entirety and read Leon Guerrero's full testimony, visit full committee hearing at https://naturalresources.house.gov/hearings/how-the-biden-administrations-build-back-better-plan-can-benefit-the-us-territories. ***(PR)***

MCS will continue to offer academic scholarships

Mount Carmel School will continue to offer academic scholarships for the 2021-2022 school year.

Academic scholarships are financial aid opportunities geared to help families afford the cost of tuition. The scholarships are determined by a select committee of faculty members who evaluate each applicant's transcripts and who exemplify a commitment to academic excellence. Each applicant is expected to also provide a letter of recommendation.

Application forms for the academic scholarships will be available online on May 1, 2021. Only complete applications will be considered prior to the deadline scheduled for May 31, 2021.

Depending on available funds, the school's board of directors will be exploring more ways to expand scholarships and financial aid for its students. These measures are being taken due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the current austerity measures in the CNMI. Additionally, the school's leadership team is also exploring ways to expand scholarship funding, possibly through earmarking a portion of all Education Tax Credit revenue toward the school's scholarship and financial aid program.

"We have many students that work hard to honor their parent's effort to send them to MCS. To honor their efforts, we feel it's important to help our families further by making scholarships available and providing some financial relief for our families," said MCS president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero.

Mount Carmel School will continue to offer academic scholarships for the 2021-2022 school year.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In addition to scholarships and financial aid, the school will continue to offer other means of providing discounts for families. Families that enroll more than one child will receive discounts for each additional student: $600 off of tuition for the second child, $1,000 off of tuition for the third child, and $1,500 off of tuition for the fourth child.

The school has also continued to open their annual early bird registration discount as follows: For grades K4-K5 registration is $50 per student (normally $100). For students in grades first through twelfth grade, the registration fee is $100 per student (normally $400.) The deadline for the Early Bird registration and fees is scheduled for May 1, 2021. ***(PR)***

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

AUDITOR I
EXAMINATION NO. OPA-21-002
Opening Date: March 19, 2021
Closing Date: April 9, 2021

For more information, please visit our website at www.opacnmi.com or come visit us at our office in Capitol Hill. Interested persons may also pick up a copy of the Examination Announcement at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Garapan.

Office of the Public Auditor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Website: http://opacnmi.com
Address: 1236 Yap Drive, Capital Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Mailing Address: PO Box 501399, Saipan MP 96950
Email: mail@opacnmi.com
Phone: (670) 322-6481 Fax: (670) 322-7812

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-MOT-061
SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 26, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.
"TINIAN DOG KENNEL RENNOVATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR, MUNICIPALITY OF TINIAN AND AGUIGUAN"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE TINIAN MAYORS OFFICE, SAN JOSE VILLAGE, TINIAN & THE TINIAN LIAISON OFFICE, NAVY HILL RD., SAIPAN. A **$100.00** NON-REFUNDABLE FEE IS FOR THE PROJECT PACKAGE WILL BE ASSESSED.

A PRE-BID MEETING AND **SITE INSPECTION** FOR THIS PROJECT IS ON **APRIL 12, 2021 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME**, AT THE PROJECT SITE, SANH JOSE, TINIAN.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MRS. RAENA CABRERA, PROJECT MANAGER, VIA EMAIL TO rcing10@gmail.com NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **ARPIL 14, 2021**. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EDWIN P. ALDAN
MAYOR OF TINIAN & AGUIGUAN

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: Dental Care, Inc.
THE POSITION: Dental Therapists
NUMBER OF OPENINGS: 3

Job Description: Perform all duties required of the position including scheduling of patients; understand and recite in person all the ada dental codes that pertain to general dentistry and show real time capability to perform such tasks; instruct oral health, disease prevention and chart oral cavity; take radiographs and develop films; perform teeth polishing and administer fluoride varnishes to children; assist dentist prepare patients, sterilize or disinfect instruments; set up instrument trays, prepare materials or assist dentist during dental procedures; expose dental diagnostic x-rays; record treatment information in patient records; provide post-operative instructions prescribed by dentist; assist dentist in management of medical or dental emergencies; take and record medical and dental histories and vital signs of patients; instruct patients in oral hygiene and plaque control programs; order and monitor dental supplies and equipment inventory; clean and polish removable appliances; and make preliminary impressions for study casts and occlusal registrations for mounting study casts.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Education: Must have at least an associate degree in dentistry or related field.

Experience: Must have at least 24 months of relevant work experience as a dental therapist or dental assistant.

Special requirements: Must have a CNMI dental therapist license.

Job site: D' Torres Bldg., Suite 103, Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

How to apply: Submit or mail resume and/or application letter to:

SCOT L. THOMPSON
DENTAL CARE, INC.

Office address: D' Torres Bldg., Suite 103
Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mailing address: P.O. Box 10001, PMB 807, Saipan, MP 96950
Email address: dentalcaresaipan@gmail.com
Telephone numbers: (670) 287-7268

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

RENATO G. CALAGE, JR. Petitioner
vs.
Cresette Bartolome Respondent,

FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0317

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 5505 CHRB Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at P.O. Box 500307 Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 9th day of October, 2020.

/s/ Clerk of Court

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950
Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of March 26, 2021

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Isa Villas Partners, LLC	02/26/2021 SMS-2017-X-111-A1	Isa Villas Phase II	Capitol Hill, Saipan	Major Siting	Approved 03/19/2021
2. Bridge Investment Group, LLC	1/8/2021 TMS-2020-X-082	Tinian Diamond Casino, Suite, Restaurant, Ferry Ticketing Center & OWTS Facility	San Jose, Tinian	Major Siting	Approved 03/19/2021
3. Saipan Golden Bridge Services Corporation dba West Coast Restaurant	03/02/2021 SS-2021-022	Outdoor Dining Area	Susupe, Saipan	Shoreline	Approved* 03/12/2021
4. Johnston Applied Marine Sciences	03/22/2021 SLR-2021-023	Sowing the seeds of success: novel approaches to improve the efficiency of coral reef restoration using sexually propagated corals	Oleai, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Under Review*

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

Business

Longtime customer takes over Hanmi Hardware

David Zheng was working on a construction project when he stopped by Hanmi Hardware one day in January of 2019. He was a frequent customer and planned to pick up some pipes. To his surprise, the then owner asked him whether he was interested in taking over the store. He was honored and excited. He realized that it's a great opportunity for him to make true some of the suggestions he gave to the then owner and yet he felt it's a big responsibility.

Zheng came to Saipan 20 years ago from China. He worked on many construction projects such as Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, and Heaven Hotel II. During his recent visits to China, he ran into many new construction materials, parts, tools and techniques and he always wanted to introduce them to Saipan, his second home. These elements resulted from rapid and massive buildup in the past 20 years in China. They are both efficient and environmentally friendly.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Hanmi Hardware is located in Garapan across Sugar King Park in Garapan along Middle Road.

After serious consideration, he and his wife made the big decision to move into hardware business and took over Hanmi Hardware.

They made a sizable expansion of the store and invested heavily in new materials and parts. They multiplied the inventory five times, drastically increased the selection for their customers. Hardware Hardware now has close to 5,000 square feet of shopping area and over 3,000 different products.

Examples of the new materials and parts he brought over from China and the U.S. are lag shields that save building effort, metal studs and tracks that prevent ants, paint-free boards that are environmentally friendly, safe, and lasting, and reducer valves that balance different water pressures which is a common problem on Saipan.

As the new owner of the store, Zheng is determined to provide good quality, better price and professional services based on his own experience in the field and as a customer before.

Zheng came from a small town in China and he really enjoys the small-town environment on Saipan. He likes to see his customers as family members and would do his best to help them. To his loyal customers, he would like to say: "Thank you for support and your satisfaction brings happiness to me and my family."

Hanmi Hardware is located in Garapan across Sugar King Park in Garapan along Middle Road. It's open from Monday to Saturday, 7:30am-5pm. For more information, contact Zheng at 285-8687 or 233-2211. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Hardware Hardware's new owners have added close to 5,000 square feet of shopping area and over 3,000 different products.

Hanmi Hardware's warehouse. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

States sue to undo Biden pause on US oil & gas lease sales

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Thirteen states sued the Biden administration Wednesday to end a suspension of new oil and gas leases on federal land and water and to reschedule canceled sales of leases in the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska waters and western states.

The Republican-leaning states, led by Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, seek a court order ending the moratorium imposed after Democratic President Joe Biden signed executive orders on climate change on Jan. 27.

The suit specifically seeks an order that the government go ahead with a sale of oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico that had been scheduled for March 17 until it was canceled; and a lease sale that had been planned for this year in Alaska's Cook Inlet.

And it calls for other suspended lease sales to go forward. Sales also have been postponed for federal lands in Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Montana, Oklahoma, Nevada and New Mexico.

Biden and multiple federal agencies bypassed comment periods and other bureaucratic steps required before such delays can be undertaken, the states claim in the lawsuit, which was filed Wednesday in the federal court's Western District of Louisiana.

The lawsuit notes that coastal states receive significant revenue from onshore and offshore oil and gas activity. Stopping leases, the lawsuit argues, would diminish revenue that pays for Louisiana efforts to restore coastal wetlands, raise energy costs and lead to major job losses in oil producing states.

At a news conference, Landry accused the Biden administration of "effectively banning oil and gas activity that supports businesses, employees our workers and, also, as importantly, funds our coastal restoration projects."

Although Landry and the lawsuit's supporters said the moratorium has already driven up prices and endangered energy jobs, Biden's suspension doesn't stop companies from drilling on existing leases. But a long-term halt to oil and gas sales would curb future production and could hurt states like Louisiana that are heavily dependent on the industry.

Biden's team has argued that companies still have plenty of undeveloped leases—almost 14 million acres (6 million hectares) in western states and more than 9 million acres (3.6 million hectares) offshore. Companies also have about 7,700 unused drilling permits—enough for years.

"This will not affect oil and gas production or jobs for years to come," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said when asked about the lawsuit's claims at a Wednesday briefing.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, is urging the White House to reconsider the moratorium, but he also pointed to the stockpiled undeveloped leases to suggest the economic threat isn't imminent. He said the Biden administration has started to issue permits for those stockpiled leases.

"Just as you're starting to have the communications get you to a point where you're feeling better about things and the permits are being issued probably isn't the best time to file litigation," Edwards said.

Biden administration officials have declined to say how long the pause on lease sales will last.

Treasury sends out additional 37 million relief payments

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Treasury Department said Wednesday that it has sent out another 37 million economic impact payments, bringing the total disbursed in the past two weeks to $325 billion.

The second batch of payments sent out this week followed an initial 90 million payments made in the week after President Joe Biden signed the $1.9 trillion COVID relief measure on March 11.

Treasury said the plan is to keep rolling out payments in batches over the coming weeks. Like the first round of payments, this latest group included direct deposits, as well as paper checks and debit cards mailed to households.

The first group of 90 million payments totaled $242 billion. The second batch of 37 million payments totals about $83 billion.

Of the second amount, 17 million payments were direct deposits into bank accounts totaling $38 billion and nearly 15 million paper checks with a total value of nearly $34 billion. In addition, 5 million prepaid debit cards were mailed out in the second batch with a total value of around $11 billion.

No action is needed for most taxpayers to receive the payments, which will be automatic and similar to how people received their first and second rounds of economic impact statements beginning in the spring of last year.

The payments, which are being made to cushion the blow of the coronavirus pandemic, started with $1,200 payments to individuals last spring followed by $600 payments in a December relief bill totaling $900 billion.

The $1.9 trillion relief measure signed earlier this month includes payments to qualifying individuals of up to $1,400.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
32,420.06	3,889.14	12,961.89
-3.09	-21.38	-265.81
.0095%	0.55%	2.01%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.3154	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7685	Russian Ruble	74.6096
British Pound	0.7304	Indian Rupee	72.2675	Singapore Dollar	1.3467
Canadian Dollar	1.2568	Japanese Yen	108.8970	South Korean Won	1112.49
Chinese Yuan	6.4380	Malaysian Ringgit	4.1037	Swiss Franc	0.9359
Euro	0.8457	New Zealand Dollar	1.4326	Taiwan Dollar	28.1579
		Philippine Peso	47.8061	Thailand Baht	31.1340

Nation

Biden taps VP Harris to lead response to border challenges

WASHINGTON (AP)— President Joe Biden has tapped Vice President Kamala Harris to lead the White House effort to tackle the migration challenge at the U.S. southern border and work with Central American nations to address root causes of the problem.

Biden made the announcement as he and Harris met at the White House on Wednesday with Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandra Mayorkas and other immigration advisers to discuss the increase in migrants, including many unaccompanied minors, arriving at the border in recent weeks.

In delegating the matter to Harris, Biden is seeking to replicate a dynamic that played out when he served as President Barack Obama's vice president. Obama turned to Biden in his first term to lead the White House effort to draw down U.S. troops in Iraq and oversee implementation of stimulus in response to the Great Recession.

AP

President Joe Biden speaks with Vice President Kamala Harris about the southern border during a meeting in the State Dining Room of the White House, Wednesday, March 24, 2021, in Washington.

"When she speaks, she speaks for me," Biden said, noting her past work as California's attorney general makes her specially equipped to lead the administration's response.

Biden, who has faced stiff criticism from Republicans over the increased flow of migrants, is hoping to show Americans he's taking the situation at the border seriously. He also wants to prevent the growing humanitarian and political challenge from overshadowing his administration's ambitious legislative agenda.

But the high-profile assignment for Harris, who ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020 and is expected to run for the White House again in the future, could be politically fraught.

"Needless to say, the work will not be easy," Harris said. "But it is important work."

Harris is tasked with overseeing diplomatic efforts to deal with issues spurring migration in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, as well as pressing them to strengthen enforcement on their own borders, administration officials said. She's also tasked with developing and implementing a long-term strategy that gets at the root causes of migration from those countries.

Biden suggested President Donald Trump's decision to cut $450 million funding in 2019 to the region was partly to blame for the situation.

Among the other reasons for the current increase: the thousands of Central American migrants already stuck at the border for months and the persistent scourge of gang violence afflicting the Northern Triangle countries.

Still, the numbers of both unaccompanied minors and families encountered at the border are lower than they were at various points during the Trump administration, including in spring 2019.

For Harris, the assignment gives her the first big opportunity to step to the front of the stage on a matter of enormous consequence for the administration. As the first Black woman elected vice president, Harris arrived on the job as a trailblazer. It has remained opaque how Biden would utilize her.

The move echoes not only Obama's decision to deputize Biden but also Trump naming Vice President Mike Pence to lead his coronavirus task force and President Bill Clinton handing Vice President Al Gore environmental and technology portfolios early in his presidency.

It's been a mixed bag for vice presidents in recent history who have been made the point person on delicate matters, said Joel Goldstein, the author of "The White House Vice Presidency: The Path to Significance, Mondale to Biden."

Lawmakers: Require nursing homes to disclose vaccine data

WASHINGTON (AP)— Nursing homes have to publicly disclose their vaccination rates for flu and pneumonia but there's no similar mandate for COVID-19 shots, even though the steepest toll from the virus has been among residents of long-term care facilities.

Now lawmakers of both parties are urging the Biden administration to require disclosure of coronavirus vaccination rates for residents and staff, and to make it easy for family members, advocacy groups and researchers to access such potentially critical details.

"The continued absence of publicly available COVID-19 vaccination information at the facility level leaves residents, workers, and their families in the dark, makes it impossible to fully evaluate the effect of these vaccines, and hinders efforts to ensure equitable vaccine access for communities of color," Sens. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, write in a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra.

The request comes as consumer advocates say it remains exceedingly difficult for family members to get coronavirus information from Medicare on individual nursing homes, either through the program's COVID-19 Nursing Home Data website, or its regular Care Compare site.

"It continues to be so problematic," said Sam Brooks, project manager for Consumer Voice, a national advocacy group for improving quality in long-term care. "It's just daunting."

Brooks said he was using Medicare's nursing home COVID-19 site recently, put in a facility's name, and a popular chain restaurant came up. A joint search Wednesday with a reporter turned up an animal hospital, after entering the name of a nursing home and the community it was located in.

Nursing homes have been required since last May to regularly report cases and deaths among residents and staff to the government. While aggregate numbers are easy to find online, data on individual facilities is not.

The coronavirus pandemic hit hardest among nursing home residents. Although only about 1% of the U.S. population lives in long-term care facilities, they accounted for about one-third of COVID-19 deaths as of early March, according to the COVID Tracking Project.

Now deaths have plummeted as more than 2 million residents and 1.5 million staff have received at least one vaccine dose. Nursing homes are again allowing loved ones to visit, and hugs are included.

Grocery store worker narrowly escaped gunman's notice

BOULDER, Colo. (AP)— An employee of the Colorado supermarket where a gunman killed 10 people watched as the assailant opened fire and narrowly escaped his notice while joining with other bystanders in a desperate scramble to get away.

Emily Giffen, 27, was smoking outside the store Monday during a break when she heard multiple loud pops that she knew were not fireworks. She said she saw a man running across an intersection suddenly fall over and another man approach him in a crouch and fire several rounds at close range.

"I don't know how he didn't see us," she said of the attacker, who walked right by her before she ran into the King Soopers store and out the back. Newly fallen snow made people trip and slip as they tried to escape, she said, showing a large bruise on her arm that she said happened when someone stepped on her.

"I just really am having a hard time understanding why me and my friends deserve to die," she said, wondering why the gunman chose to target the Boulder store specifically. "It doesn't seem personal, so I don't quite get why we pulled that lottery ticket."

Giffen made the comments Wednesday in an interview with The Associated Press as families mourned the dead and multiple law enforcement agencies pressed ahead with what they said would be a monthslong investigation. Officials hadn't released new details on that investigation by late Wednesday.

The 21-year-old suspect, Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa, was in jail and scheduled to make his first court appearance Thursday on murder charges. No lawyer was listed for Alissa in court records.

More than 500 people bundled in masks and wool hats attended a downtown candlelight vigil Wednesday night to mourn the victims. They observed a moment of silence; violins soothed the crowd; and a woman sang "Ave Maria" as candle flames flickered in the crisp air.

Other community vigils were planned to honor the victims. The Boulder Police Department invited the public to show support for Officer Eric Talley, who was killed, by witnessing a police procession Wednesday as his body was taken from the coroner's office to a funeral home in the Denver suburb of Aurora.

Red and blue lights flashed along a parkway as dozens of officers from Boulder and neighboring departments stood at attention. When the hearse passed, the officers saluted as one shouted, "Attention!" One person held an American flag.

Talley, 51, was the first officer to arrive at the scene. He had seven children, ages 7 to 20.

The other victims were Denny Stong, 20; Neven Stanisic, 23; Rikki Olds, 25; Tralona Bartkowiak, 49; Suzanne Fountain, 59; Teri Leiker, 51; Kevin Mahoney, 61; Lynn Murray, 62; and Jodi Waters, 65.

Olds, Leiker and Stong worked at the supermarket.

Kim Cordova, president of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7, which represents more than 30 store employees, said they did their best to get customers to safety.

"They grabbed everybody they could, and they brought them to the backroom or to other areas of the store to hide, or got them out through the back dock," Cordova said.

On Facebook posts and in an interview, Giffen said her friends deserved better, not to die at work while doing their jobs.

"This guy, he went hunting in a barrel full of fish. Nobody was prepared to fight back. No one was even prepared to hide," she said. "It's just the fear like, where do you, where do I ever feel safe?"

Giffen, who said she has worked at the King Soopers for three years, described a close-knit community where she chats with customers and remembers their bagel orders from when she worked at a nearby bagel place.

Asia

N. Korea test-fires ballistic missiles in message to US

겨레말 큰사전공동편찬위원회
2005. 2. 20
겨레말큰사전 공동편찬위원회 결성식
Launch of the Joint Board of South and North Korea for the Compilation of Gyeoremal - Keunsajeon (unified Korean language dictionary)
2006.10.9
북한, 1차 핵실험 실시
North Korea's first Nuclear test
2005. 7. 19

AP

A photo showing North Korea's missile launch is displayed at the Unification Observation Post in Paju, near the border with North Korea, South Korea, Wednesday, March 24, 2021.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea test-fired its first ballistic missiles since President Joe Biden took office on Thursday, as it expands its military capabilities and increases pressure on Washington while nuclear negotiations remain stalled.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said the launches threaten "peace and safety in Japan and the region," and that Tokyo will closely coordinate with Washington and Seoul on the North's testing activities.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missiles were fired at around 7:06 a.m. and 7:25 a.m. from an area on the North's eastern coast and flew 450 kilometers (279 miles) on an apogee of 60 kilometers (37 miles) before landing in the sea.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command spokesperson Capt. Mike Kafka said the U.S. military was aware of the missiles and was monitoring the situation while closely consulting with allies.

Another senior U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military observations, matched the information from South Korea's military, saying that initial assessments suggest the North fired two short-range ballistic missiles.

"This activity highlights the threat that North Korea's illicit weapons program poses to its neighbors and the international community," Kafka said.

The launches came a day after U.S. and South Korean officials said the North fired short-range weapons presumed to be cruise missiles into its western sea over the weekend.

North Korea has a history of testing new U.S. administrations with missile launches and other provocations aimed at forcing the Americans back to the negotiating table.

Still, Thursday's launches were a measured provocation compared to the nuclear and intercontinental missile tests in 2017 that inspired war fears before the North shifted toward diplomacy with the Trump administration in 2018.

Analysts say that the North would gradually dial up its weapons displays to increase its bargaining power as it angles to get back into stalled talks aimed at leveraging nuclear weapons for badly needed economic benefits.

It's unclear how the Biden administration would respond before it completes its policy review on North Korea in the coming weeks.

The negotiations over the North's nuclear program faltered after the collapse of Kim Jong Un's second summit with President Donald Trump in February 2019, when the Americans rejected North Korean demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of their nuclear capabilities.

Since Trump's first meeting with Kim in 2018, the North has not conducted nuclear or long-range missile tests, although analysts believe they have pressed ahead with their programs on both.

Myanmar junta frees hundreds held for anti-coup protests

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Hundreds of people imprisoned for demonstrating against last month's coup in Myanmar were released Wednesday, a rare conciliatory gesture by the military that appeared aimed at placating the protest movement.

Witnesses outside Insein Prison in Yangon saw busloads of mostly young people, looking happy with some flashing the three-finger gesture of defiance adopted by protesters. State-run TV said a total of 628 were freed.

Also Wednesday, Thein Zaw, a journalist for The Associated Press who was arrested last month while covering an anti-coup protest, was released.

Myanmar's security forces have cracked down violently on protests against a Feb. 1 coup that reversed a decade of progress toward democracy in the Southeast Asian country and ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners says that at least 275 people have been killed in connection with the crackdown. Thousands have also been arrested, and more than 2,000 remain in custody or have charges against them outstanding.

Wednesday's release was an unusual overture by the military, which has so far seemed impervious to both internal pressure from protests and outside pressure from sanctions. In the face of an increasingly brutal crackdown, demonstrators tried a new tactic Wednesday that they dubbed a silence strike, calling on people to stay home and businesses to close for the day.

The prisoners released appear to be the hundreds of students detained in early March. One lawyer, speaking on condition of anonymity because she fears drawing attention from the authorities, said all those released were arrested on March 3. She said only 55 people detained in connection with the protests remained in the prison, and it is likely they will all face charges under a law that carries a penalty of up to three years in prison.

The mass release came the same day that Thein Zaw was also freed. Thein Zaw told the AP that the judge in his case announced during a hearing that all charges against him were dropped because he was doing his job at the time of his arrest.

"I'm looking forward to meeting my family members," he said. "I'm sorry for some colleagues who are still in prison."

Meanwhile, messages online urged people to stay home Wednesday in protest—rather than flooding the streets as they have in the past—saying silence is "the loudest scream." The messages explained the strike's purpose was to honor the movement's fallen heroes, to allow protesters to recharge and to contradict the junta's claims that "everything is back to normal."

The extent of the strike was difficult to gauge, but social media users posted photos from cities and towns showing streets empty of activity save for an occasional stray dog. Some protesters did go out to release red balloons with leaflets attached.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Duterte orders mayors investigated

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine president has ordered at least nine city and town mayors investigated for possible charges after they reportedly jumped ahead of a priority list led by 1.7 million health workers and got injected with COVID-19 vaccine amid a shortage in supply. President Rodrigo Duterte said in a televised meeting Wednesday night with key Cabinet members that aside from the mayors, the son of an actress also got immunized. He expressed fears that the Philippines may lose the chance to get more donated vaccines arranged by the World Health Organization if its conditions would continue to be violated. "We were told by the WHO country representative, `if you do not follow the list of priority, you might lose the assistance of the WHO,'" Duterte said. "It wasn't followed because I heard even the son of an actress got it. It's always the favored few." Health Secretary Francisco Duque III reported to Duterte that just slightly more than 508,000 of a total 1.7 million doctors, nurses and other health workers have been immunized and added that only 1.5 million vaccine doses, all donated by China and the WHO, have arrived in the country so far.

Hong Kong halts use of Pfizer vaccine, cites defective lids

HONG KONG (AP)—Hong Kong suspended use of the Pfizer vaccine Wednesday after its Chinese distributor informed the city that one batch had defective bottle lids. The city's government said the suspension was immediate while the matter is investigated by distributor Fosun Pharma and BioNTech, the German company that created the vaccine with American pharmaceutical firm Pfizer. BioNTech and Fosun Pharma have not found any reason to believe the product is unsafe, according to the statement. However, vaccinations will be halted as a preventive and safety measure. The defective lids were found on vaccines from batch number 210102. A separate batch of vaccines, 210104, will also be not be administered. The semi-autonomous territory of Macao also said Wednesday that its residents will not receive the Pfizer shots from the same batch. The vaccines from the batch comprise a total of 585,000 doses, with the other batch number 210104 holding 758,000 doses, according to Hong Kong's Director of Health Constance Chan.

Thai protesters hold peaceful rally criticizing the monarchy

BANGKOK (AP)—Thai pro-democracy protesters who last year broke a long-standing taboo by publicly criticizing the country's monarchy returned to the streets Wednesday to defiantly repeat their calls for reform of the royal institution. The rally in the middle of a Bangkok shopping district was called by the United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration, a faction of a broader protest movement that started last year and has three core demands: the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha and his government, for the constitution to be amended to make it more democratic and the monarchy to be reformed to make it more accountable. It is the latter demand that has rattled Thailand's traditional establishment, which is fiercely opposed to change, especially with regard to the monarchy. Several activists involved with the protests have already been jailed as they await trial on charges of violating Thailand's lese majeste law, which makes criticizing, insulting or defaming the king or other key royals punishable by up to 15 years' imprisonment.

World

US, Europe, NATO close ranks to counter 'aggressive' China

BRUSSELS (AP)—The United States and European countries are closing ranks to respond to what the U.S. calls "aggressive and coercive" behavior by China, days after the U.S. and its allies launched coordinated sanctions against Chinese officials accused of rights abuses in the far-western Xinjiang region.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that he wants to work with the U.S.'s partners on "how to advance our shared economic interests and to counter some of China's aggressive and coercive actions, as well as its failures, at least in the past, to uphold its international commitments."

Blinken agreed in talks with senior European Union officials on the launch of what EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell described as an EU-U.S. dialogue on China "to discuss the full range of related challenges and opportunities."

"We share an assessment of China's role as a partner, as a competitor, and a systemic rival," Borrell told reporters after their meeting in Brussels, where Blinken has been underlining the importance that alliances and international partnerships play for the Biden administration.

Earlier, at NATO headquarters, Blinken said "when we are acting together, we are much stronger and much more effective than if any single one of us is doing it alone." He noted that alone the U.S. accounts for about 25% of global GDP, but up to 60% with its allies in Europe and Asia. "That's a lot harder for Beijing to ignore," he said.

On Monday, the U.S., EU, Britain and Canada imposed asset freezes and travel bans on a group of officials in Xinjiang. China retaliated by slapping sanctions on 10 Europeans, including lawmakers and academics, and four institutions. Beijing said they had damaged China's interests and "maliciously spread lies and disinformation."

Initially, China denied the existence of camps detaining Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang but has since described them as centers to provide job training and to re-educate those exposed to extremists. Chinese officials deny all charges of human rights abuses there.

Blinken said at NATO that Beijing's retaliatory sanctions "make it all the more important that we stand firm and stand together, or risk sending the message that bullying works."

But views on the way that business and trade should play out differ across the Atlantic.

The EU is China's biggest trading partner but they are also economic competitors. As Beijing has become more assertive in recent years, the 27-nation bloc has struggled to balance its commercial interests with a country that it sees as "a systemic rival" and has human rights concerns about.

The two sealed a major investment agreement in December giving European businesses about the same level of market access in China as those from the United States. It was announced just weeks before President Joe Biden took office and raised some concerns that the Europeans were undercutting Biden's leverage as he looked to take a tougher line on China.

But Blinken said "the United States won't force our allies into an 'us-or-them' choice with China." He warned of Beijing's threatening behavior, but said "that doesn't mean countries can't work with China where possible, for example on challenges like climate change and health security."

Pope, citing pandemic effect, cuts pay for cardinals, others

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Trying to save jobs as the pandemic pummels Vatican revenues, Pope Francis has ordered pay cuts for cardinals and other clerics, as well as nuns, who work at the Holy See.

In a decree published online Wednesday by the Vatican's official newspaper L'Osservatore Romano, Francis said that starting in April cardinals' salaries will be reduced 10%. Superiors of the Holy See's various departments, who, with few exceptions, are clerics, will be hit by 8% cuts while lower-ranking priests and nuns will see 3% vanish from their paychecks.

In the decree he signed on Tuesday, the pope noted that the Holy See's finances have been marked by several years of deficit. Worsening those financial woes, the pope wrote, was the COVID-19 pandemic, "which has impacted negatively on all the sources of revenue of the Holy See and Vatican City State."

The belt-tightening "has the aim of saving current job positions," Francis wrote.

Lower-ranking lay-workers at the Vatican aren't affected by the salary reductions, but their pay raises, due every two years, are being temporarily frozen under the austerity measures. The lowest-paid lay workers will still get raise, though.

Bans on tourism by many countries and other pandemic restrictions have severely reduced revenues at the Vatican Museums, which, with its Sistine Chapel, is a perennial money-maker for the Vatican,

The Museums opened for some weeks during the pandemic when the situation in Italy improved. But with tourists from the United States and some other countries banned from entering Italy, the museums' cavernous rooms were eerily uncrowded in the pandemic.

The Museums are currently closed and will stay closed at least through the upcoming Holy Week, which normally is one of Rome's heaviest periods for tourism.

Earlier this month, the Vatican said it has nearly used up its financial reserves from past donations to cover budget deficits over recent years. It has predicted a 50-million-euro ($60 million) deficit for this year.

Pandemic safety measures have seen many churches shuttered or limiting the number of faithful—many of whom leave monetary donations during services—who can enter.

The Vatican's economy minister has said that the dwindled Museums revenue, as well as a drop in what Catholics donate, would contribute to a projected 30% reduction in revenue this year.

The pay cuts also apply to several Vatican basilicas in Rome as well as to the Vicariate, or diocese of Rome, which is under the pope's direction.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

†VICTOR T. VENUS

Lovingly known as "Manong Vic"

SEPTEMBER 02, 1937 — MARCH 21, 2021

In his new life, he now joins his:

Parents: †Pedro Venus & †Maxima Venus

Siblings: †Wincesiao T. Venus, †Igmedio T. Venus, †Lorito T. Venus, †Ruping T. Venus, †Salvador T. Venus, †Juanito T. Venus

His memories will live in the hearts of his:

Wife: **Aida F. Venus**

Children: **Hector F. Venus & Loraine I. Venus**
Loriana I. Teigita
Abner F. Venus & Cristy A. Venus
Ruby Ann R. Venus, Julcristener A. Venus, Marc Christian A. Venus, & James Michael A. Venus
Jane F. Venus-Nocentelli & Charles Nocentelli
Jafarri Charles V. Nocentelli, Jaleon Victor V. Nocentelli, & Jace Hector V. Nocentelli

Sisters-In-Law:
Bellia Dinero
Maternidad Barnuevo
Minerva Sumalde

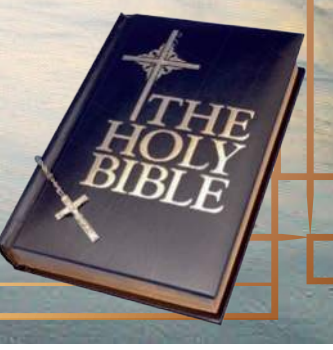
Cousins:
Severa F. Daria & Bernardo Daria
Bryan Shawn F. Daria & Bea Shiena F. Daria

Nieces/Nephews:
Rosemarie B. Santos & Ali Santos
Allyrose B. Santos & Ali Jr. B. Santos
Cecille T. Canarejo & Federico Canarejo
Clarice Canarejo

He will be missed by numerous family members and friends.

Daily mass intentions are offered at:
Kristo Rai Parish at 6:00am-7:00am
San Roque Parish at 6:00pm-7:00pm
San Jose Parish at 6:00pm-7:00pm (weekdays), 7:00am & 9:00am (weekends)

Funeral service will be held on Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at Kristo Rai Parish. Viewing and visitation to pay last respects will begin at 8:00am. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00am, followed by interment services at Tanapag Cemetery.



We thank you for your thoughts and prayers.

Aida Venus & Family

Off The Wall

Lost and found: $1M lottery ticket recovered in parking lot

SPARTA, Tenn. (AP)—A Tennessee man was able to turn his luck around after finding his missing $1 million winning lottery ticket in a parking lot—remaining where he dropped it even on a blustery afternoon.

Sparta resident Nick Slatten learned on March 11 that he won a drawing with all matching numbers on a ticket worth $1,178,746, the Tennessee Education Lottery said in a statement.

"I was stunned. I couldn't believe it," said Slatten, who bought the winning ticket at a local grocery store March 10 after a day of laying tile.

Slatten rushed to his fiancée's workplace to share the news, then continued running errands, including taking his brother to buy a car part, followed by a stop for lunch. Within an hour, Slatten went from ecstatic to panicked when he realized he didn't have the ticket anymore.

To make matters worse, if a player loses an unsigned ticket, anyone can claim it, the lottery said. So Slatten immediately began retracing his steps, eventually leading him back to the auto parts store where he saw the ticket lying in the parking lot.

"It's a million-dollar ticket, and someone stepped right over it," Slatten said.

He was able to retrieve the ticket—which somehow didn't get blown away—and claim his prize.

Man arrested after taking kid into zoo pen

SAN DIEGO (AP)—A father has been arrested on suspicion of child endangerment after he carried his 2-year-old daughter into the elephant habitat at the San Diego Zoo to take a photograph with the animals.

The man bypassed multiple barriers and "purposely and illegally trespassed" into a habitat for Asian and African elephants Friday afternoon, zoo spokesman Andrew James said.

A witness video provided to NBC San Diego shows a man dropping the child as they flee the enclosure as a trumpeting elephant charged at them. The man picked up the toddler and was able to get her out safely.

Police said the 25-year-old man wanted to take a photo with the African bull elephant. James said the elephants were not harmed.

San Diego County jail records show Jose Manuel Navarrete was being held on $100,000 bail for investigation of child endangerment. He was set to be arraigned on March 30.

It wasn't immediately known if he had a lawyer who would speak on his behalf.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Florida couple offers free beer as way to meet the neighbors

CAPE CORAL, Fla. (AP)—A Florida couple came up with a great way to meet their new neighbors after moving into their home during the coronavirus pandemic. They offered free beer. Amanda and Thomas Evans decided to move from Fort Myers to nearby Cape Coral just before the pandemic started last year. "It was a different experience I think than most first time homebuyers," Amanda Evans told ABC7 television station. They were not sure when they would get to meet their new neighbors. "Luckily, we have a rescue dog that we walk around the block every day, so we met some people in passing," she said. "Typically, you would bring people cookies or pie or invite them over for dinner, but we weren't sure about how people were feeling," Amanda added. Instead, they created a flyer: "Hi, we're new to the neighborhood and would like to meet our lovely neighbors. We will be in our driveway with drinks, ready to meet any neighbors who would like to stop by. We can't wait to meet you." Her husband wasn't sure anyone would show up. But once the "Free Beer" sign was placed outside, the neighbors started venturing over.

Former worker gets new trial in fake-gun McDonald's stickup

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—A man convicted of using a fake gun to try robbing a McDonald's restaurant where he once worked has been granted a new trial. In a unanimous ruling, New Jersey's Supreme Court held that a trial judge unfairly prevented Thomas Outland from acting as his own attorney at his 2017 trial. Outland was convicted of conspiracy and possession of an imitation firearm for an unlawful purpose after he and an accomplice were accused of trying to rob a McDonald's in Union County in 2015. According to trial testimony cited in Tuesday's ruling, Outland and the accomplice entered the restaurant and demanded money. But the caper was foiled when an employee noticed that Outland's shotgun was a fake and called him out on it. When Outland took off his mask, a manager recognized him as a former employee. Outland laughed, said it was a joke and tried to hug the manager before leaving, according to testimony.

Wurst case: Burglar caught over bite from German's sausage

BERLIN (AP)—German police say they have solved a nine-year-old burglary after DNA found on a half-eaten piece of sausage matched that of a man detained in France over an unrelated crime. Police in the western town of Schwelm said Thursday that the sausage belonged to the victim, and the suspect—a 30-year-old Albanian citizen—appeared to have helped himself to a bite during the March 2012 break-in. It wasn't clear what type of sausage—known in Germany as wurst—the burglar had nibbled, though police said it was a hard variety. Investigators were recently alerted that French police had taken a matching DNA sample from a man involved in a violent crime. But Schwelm police said the suspect remains free and, in the wurst case, he may escape punishment. The statute of limitations on the burglary has expired, meaning he will likely not be extradited to Germany.

Popcorn machine nixed at North Dakota Capitol after alarms

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP)—A popcorn machine has been removed from the North Dakota Capitol after it twice triggered fire alarms that brought firefighters to the building this week and caused legislators to evacuate. Rep. Mary Johnson was on her third batch of popcorn Monday afternoon when the machine triggered the alarms for the second time that day. Johnson said she wasn't aware of a policy that bans popcorn poppers, toasters and other food appliances from the building, with the exception of the Capitol Cafe. House Majority Leader Chet Pollert said the popcorn helped bring together House Republicans, whose caucus has been "a little strained" due to the coronavirus pandemic and the House expulsion of former Rep. Luke Simons, the Bismarck Tribune reported.

Science & Technology

AstraZeneca confirms strong vaccine protection after US rift

A vial of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India and provided through the global COVAX initiative, is removed from a portable cold storage box in preparation for a vaccination, in Machakos, Kenya, Wednesday, March 24, 2021. AP

AstraZeneca insisted Wednesday that its COVID-19 vaccine is strongly effective even after counting additional illnesses in its disputed U.S. study, the latest in an extraordinary public rift with American officials.

In a late-night press release, AstraZeneca said it had recalculated data from that study and concluded the vaccine is 76% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19, instead of the 79% it had claimed earlier in the week.

Just a day earlier, an independent panel that oversees the study had accused AstraZeneca of cherry-picking data to tout the protection offered by its vaccine. The panel, in a harsh letter to the company and to U.S. health leaders, said the company had left out some COVID-19 cases that occurred in the study, a move that could erode trust in the science.

Despite name, 'digital' computer speakers are really analog

TECH Q&A

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Star Tribune *of Minneapolis. Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.*

Q: My Boston Acoustics BA735 digital speakers came with a previous computer, but I'd like to connect them to my MacBook Pro. The speakers and the Mac both use the same 3.5-millimeter jack system, but the speakers are digital and the Mac only outputs an analog signal. Is there some kind of analog-to-digital converter I can use to make the speakers compatible with the MacBook?

A: You don't need to convert anything, because the term "digital speakers" is a misnomer. All speakers are analog, whether they connect to a computer or a stereo system. Because your speakers have their own power source and use a 3.5-millimeter connecting jack, you can plug them into the analog "audio out" port on your MacBook and they should work.

If the speakers aren't getting any sound from the Mac, make sure the Mac's sound is on and clean the audio port with a paper clip to remove lint. If that doesn't work, try restarting the Mac.

If those things don't get results, perform an "NVRAM reset" (see tinyurl.com/3jpepmpb). NVRAM (nonvolatile random-access memory) is a computer chip that stores Mac settings. Resetting it will return the Mac's audio and video to their default settings, which should enable your speakers to work properly.

Note: In a column two weeks ago (see tinyurl.com/frr35pcs), Jonathan Griebel of Maple Grove said that his Android Phone and his 2016 Toyota RAV4 had stopped communicating. I blamed an outdated version of the Android Auto program, and suggested a software update for the car. But longtime automotive writer Mark Houlahan of Lakeland, Fla., said the 2016 car probably uses non-Android Auto software and older hardware, which could stop connecting when a phone's software was upgraded. If he's right, the car needs new hardware and software.

Q: Nearly everything in my iPhone 7 contacts list has disappeared. Verizon Wireless said I should re-enter the contacts from my old Kyocera phone. But Apple said I should first do a factory reset of the phone, which would erase my pictures and e-mails. What should I do?

A: You should perform the factory reset, but back up your data first.

Your e-mail isn't at risk; it's backed up on your provider's server and you can download it again. But your photos probably aren't backed up, and would be lost. Here are some backup options:

- Back up your photos to your computer via iTunes and a USB cable. It's free, and you can move the photos back to the phone later (see tinyurl.com/4kj54suv and tinyurl.com/3a2sewp7).
- Back up your photos (and any other data) in Apple's iCloud storage service. You will need to buy more storage; the free 5 gigabytes that came with the phone isn't enough. For $1 a month you can get 50 gigabytes, or for $3 a month 200 gigabytes (see tinyurl.com/c8ns29mw). (To restore the iCloud photos to your phone after the reset, see tinyurl.com/yrjz8nb5).
- Buy online storage space from Dropbox ($10 a month for 2,000 gigabytes, see tinyurl.com/m2nj2asr and click "Plans & pricing") or Google (you get 15 gigabytes of free space with a Google account, and it's $2 a month for another 100 gigabytes, see tinyurl.com/2zmfy8z2). (To restore online photos to your phone after the reset, see tinyurl.com/fb7jdchv for Google and tinyurl.com/5e9hvvp8 for Dropbox)

Life & Style

Chrissy Teigen deletes Twitter account, citing negativity

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Chrissy Teigen has deleted her popular Twitter account, saying the site no longer plays a positive role in her life.

"For over 10 years you guys have been my world," Teigen wrote to her 13.7 million followers Wednesday night. "But it's time to say goodbye. This no longer serves me as positively as it serves me negatively, and I think that's the right time to call something."

Teigen

Teigen's account was popular for its mix of jokes about her husband John Legend and their children, their playful banter on the site, funny observations about assorted topics and fierce retorts for those she disagreed with or who criticized her.

That reputation is at odds with who she really is, the model and cookbook author wrote.

"My life goal is to make people happy," she wrote. "The pain I feel when I don't is too much for me. I've always been portrayed as the strong clap back girl but I'm just not."

Last year, T eigen shared the heartbreak of a miscarriage on the site, posting an anguished picture of her in the hospital. Another image showed her and Legend grieving over a bundle cradled in her arms.

While her candor about the loss of their son won praise, some criticized her for putting such painful moments on social media.

She wrote Wednesday that she's experienced so many attacks from low-follower accounts that she's "deeply bruised."

In one of her final posts, she told her followers to "never forget that your words matter."

Teigen's Instagram account, with more than 34 million followers, remains active as does Legend's Twitter account, with 14 million followers.

Denmark: Repairman dies while working on massive sculpture

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Police in Denmark say a repairman died while working on a steel column that is part of a massive sculpture in the city of Herning.

Jutland region police said the 46-year-old man was performing maintenance work on the sculpture, titled "Elia," and was nearing the top of the 32-meter-high (105-feet-high) column when the crane operator hoisting him up lost radio contact late Tuesday afternoon.

A rescue operation with another crane ended when the repairman was found suspended on the column and declared dead by a doctor at the site.

Police said it remained unclear whether the man died of a medical condition or an accident related to his work.

"Elia," created by Swedish-Danish sculptor Ingvar Cronhammar, was inaugurated in 2001. It consists of a spherical central dome with a diameter of 60 meters (200 feet) and four tall columns. A tube in the center of the sculpture is designed randomly blast flames some eight meters (26 feet) into the air at intervals.

'Nomadland' wins PGA Award, cementing front-runner status

NEW YORK (AP)—Chloé Zhao's "Nomadland" cemented its Oscar front-runner status Wednesday, winning the top award at the 32nd annual Producers Guild of America Awards.

"Nomadland," Zhao's recession-era portrait of itinerant people in the American West, is only the second film directed by a woman to win the producers' Darryl F. Zanuck award for outstanding producer of a motion picture. The other was Kathryn Bigelow's "The Hurt Locker" in 2010.

In a delayed, virtual and very long awards season that has marched along during the pandemic with little of the usual pomp, declaring a clear front-runner has been challenging. But if any film could claim that mantle, it's "Nomadland," winner of the Golden Globe best picture award for drama. Zhao, too, is considered the favorite for best director. If she does win, she would only the second female director to do so, again after Bigelow.

"Nomadland," made for less than $5 million and with many nonprofessional actors, is an unusually low-budget winner for the PGA honor, which has traditionally gone to larger-scale productions.

"In a year where we have been all been leading such isolated lives and movies felt so vital, we are proud to have produced a film about community and what connects us," said producer Peter Spears, accepting the award in a taped message.

The PGA Awards are watched especially closely as an Oscar bellwether. The producers use the same preferential ballot as the film academy, and their best-picture fields often nearly mirror each other. This year, the producers nominated a few movies the academy passed over for best picture ("Borat Subsequent Moviefilm," "One Night in Miami," "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom") while skipping one that landed the Oscar nomination: "The Father."

In the 11 years since the Oscars expanded the best-picture category, the two groups have picked the same winner eight times. They differed last year, when the guild chose "1917" and the academy crowned "Parasite"; in 2017, when "La La Land" triumphed with the PGA and "Moonlight" won the Oscar; and in 2016, when the "The Big Short" topped the producers' awards and "Spotlight" won the Academy Award.

Queen Elizabeth's granddaughter Zara has third child at home

LONDON (AP)—Queen Elizabeth II's granddaughter Zara Tindall and her husband, the former rugby player, Mike Tindall, are celebrating the birth of their third child, who was born at home on the bathroom floor after the couple were unable to get to a hospital in time.

Lucas Philip Tindall was born Sunday, weighing in at 8 pounds, 4 ounces, a representative for the couple said Wednesday. His middle name is in honor of both Mike Tindall's father as well as Zara's grandfather, Prince Philip. He is 22nd in line to the throne, but won't take the His Royal Highness title.

Tindall, 42, revealed that the speed of the arrival of the latest royal baby—he is the queen's and Philip's 10th great-grandchild—caught the couple off guard and that he had to rush to get a mat for his 39-year-old wife, who like her mother, Princess Anne, enjoyed a successful equestrian career.

CEO says Harry hire is a natural fit, not a publicity stunt

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—The CEO of BetterUp Inc. said Wednesday that he hired Prince Harry as an executive because of his tenacious advocacy for the kind of mental health services that his firm provides, and the publicity brought by the move is merely a perk.

Chief Executive Alexi Robichaux spoke to The Associated Press a day after the announcement that the Duke of Sussex will play the specially created role of chief impact officer at the San Francisco-based BetterUp, which sells companies employee coaching and mental health help.

"Prince Harry has been one of the the the fiercest advocates for mental wellness or mental fitness for many years," Robichaux said, citing Harry's work for organizations like Head Fit, a service he launched in partnership with the U.K. Ministry of Defense. "This has been a big part of his personal life's journey and his personal life's mission."

Harry

It doesn't hurt, he conceded, that Harry is among the world's most famous men, who seems to constantly be making news along with his wife, Meghan Markle.

"It's awesome. I mean, look, we'll take the press, it certainly helps," he said. But was quick to add, "that's not the driving motivation here."

Robichaux said the role emerged out of months of conversations he and Harry had after they were introduced by an unnamed mutual friend who rightly thought the two thought alike.

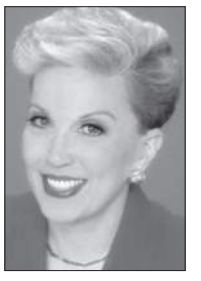
"There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm on both sides around this mission of how could we use technology, how could we use science, how could we use human experts to help people go through a personal growth and transformation journey?" Robichaux said. "And so that was the start."

Fortunes change for homeless woman but not her companion

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR ABBY: I used to be a successful working woman until I lost my husband of 30 years. After I became homeless, I met "Tom." We've been good friends for the last five years, hanging out in the woods, sometimes getting hotel rooms. It's a platonic relationship, but we rely on each other.

I receive Social Security survivor benefits now, and I want to move on and get my own place. He says he's fine with it, but I feel terribly guilty. He gets a small disability check but is not wise with money. How can I comfort him?

GUILTY IN FLORIDA

DEAR GUILTY: Tom has told you he is fine with you upgrading your living situation. I presume that you don't intend to desert him. Believe him and stop flogging yourself for your good fortune. Help him when you can and encourage him to contact an agency that helps the homeless so he can get his life back on track, too.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm in a same-sex relationship with a woman I love and admire. But five months in, sex is becoming impossible because I think I'm heterosexual. Leaving this relationship scares me because I can't imagine a life without her.

I told her I didn't know if, for several reasons, sex would be a part of our relationship, but that I do love her. She doesn't seem to mind at all. I'm not sure what to do. Please help.

LOVING IN LOUISIANA

DEAR LOVING: What you need to do is be honest with your partner. It is possible that you are bisexual and need to explore relationships with men before making up your mind about any permanent relationship. If sex is important to you, then the person you wind up with may not be this woman you love and admire, but someone else entirely.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My grandson died by suicide in 2019. My daughter, who lives in another state, hasn't spoken to me since. Why? Because we did not call her on the phone. We were texting her, and she was texting us back. When I did try to call, she wouldn't answer the phone.

It has been more than a year now. She won't respond to other family members, either. Please advise me what to do in this sad situation.

WOUNDED GRANDMA IN TEXAS

DEAR GRANDMA: Not knowing your daughter, I am hesitant to guess why she has isolated herself from everyone. She may have felt she was entitled to more support from you all and didn't receive it.

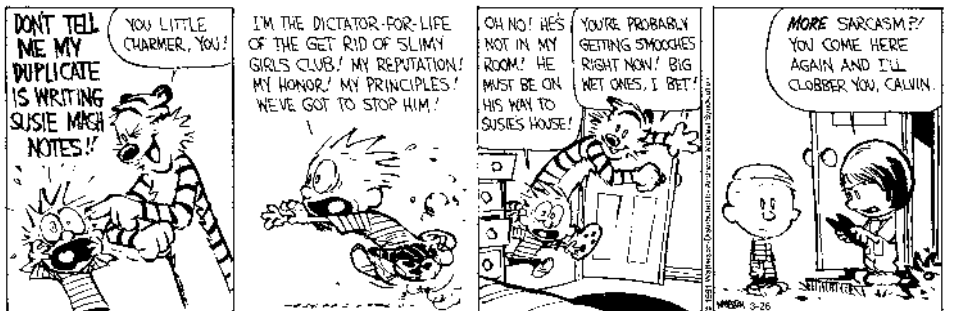
As many people have pointed out in my column, while texts may be efficient, they are a poor substitute for a human voice. Because she refuses your calls, write her a letter telling her you love her and apologize for letting her down after the tragedy of losing her son. Whether it will help, I can't guess—but at least the olive branch will have been offered.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

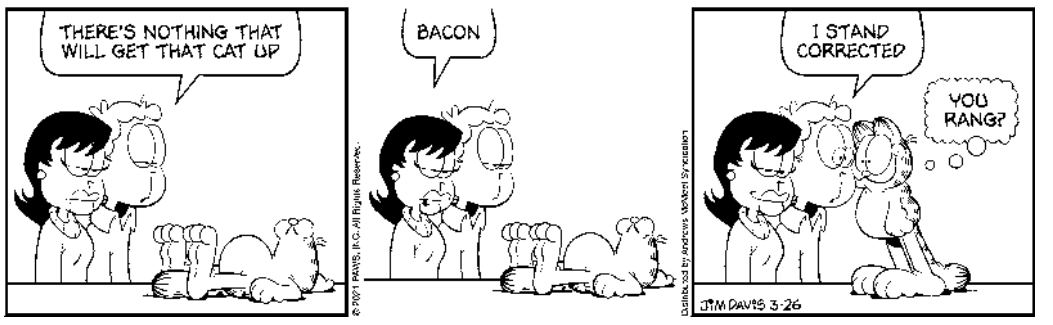
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


DON'T TELL ME MY DUPLICATE IS WRITING SUSIE MACH NOTES!!
YOU LITTLE CHARMER, YOU!
I'M THE DICTATOR-FOR-LIFE OF THE GET RID OF SLIMY GIRLS CLUB! MY REPUTATION! MY HONOR! MY PRINCIPLES! WE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!
OH NO! HE'S NOT IN MY ROOM! HE MUST BE ON HIS WAY TO SUSIES HOUSE!
YOU'RE PROBABLY GETTING SMOOCHES RIGHT NOW! BIG WET ONES, I BET!
MORE SARCASM?! YOU COME HERE AGAIN AND I'LL CLOBBER YOU, CALVIN.

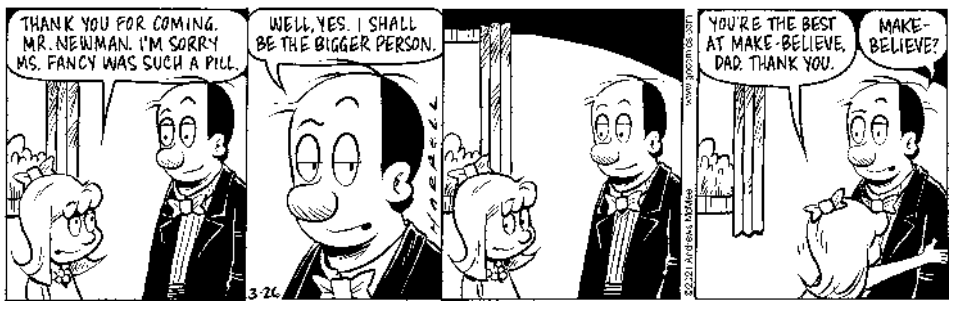
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



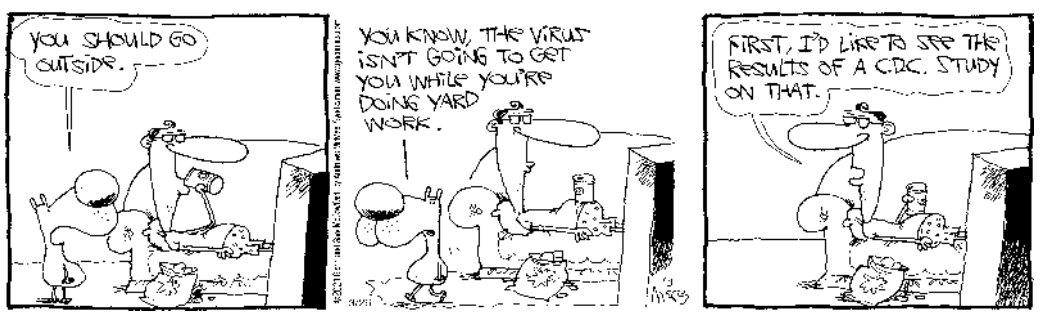
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


THANK YOU FOR COMING, MR. NEWMAN. I'M SORRY MS. FANCY WAS SUCH A PILL.
WELL, YES. I SHALL BE THE BIGGER PERSON.
YOU'RE THE BEST AT MAKE-BELIEVE, DAD. THANK YOU.
MAKE-BELIEVE?
3-26

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


YOU SHOULD GO OUTSIDE.
YOU KNOW, THE VIRUS ISN'T GOING TO GET YOU WHILE YOU'RE DOING YARD WORK.
FIRST, I'D LIKE TO SEE THE RESULTS OF A C.D.C. STUDY ON THAT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "GMA" network
4 Kate of "The Martian"
8 Fibs
12 Pair with an air
13 Big-screen format
14 Ad agcy. client
15 Anise-flavored liqueur
17 Head, to Henri
18 Yoga class pads
19 Fusses
20 Abounds
22 Fine
24 Feedbag filler
25 Catch some rays
29 Calendar abbr.
30 Theater boxes
31 — Lingus
32 Strip
34 Slope transport
35 Right on the map?
36 Surveys
37 Pristine
40 — gin fizz
41 Galley supply
42 Gilbert & Sullivan opera
46 Oklahoma tribe
47 Fat
48 Tic-tac-toe win
49 Some July babies
50 Ocean motion
51 Calligrapher's instrument

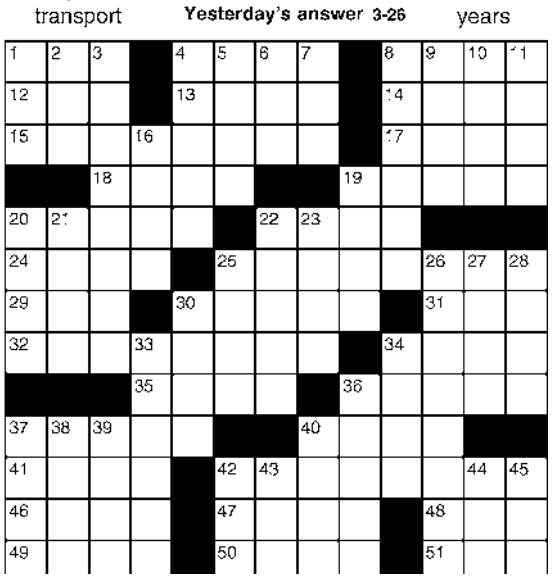
DOWN

1 Oklahoma city
2 Fella
3 Type of surgery
4 Breath fresheners
5 Quantities (Abbr.)
6 Fan's cry
7 Chopper
8 Janet Jackson's sister
9 Chilled
10 Outside (Pref.)
11 Fr. holy women
16 Pet food brand
19 Bar bills
20 Bean curd
21 Deserve
22 Should, with "to"
23 Leg joint
25 Lushes
26 Dining surface, e.g.
27 Make well
28 Messes up
30 Cash advance
33 Rental contracts
34 Animated figure
36 Dish
37 "Neato!"
38 Overdue
39 Slangy suffix
40 "Citizen Kane" prop
42 Follower (Suff.)
43 French "yes"
44 Weeding tool
45 A billion years

Solution time: 25 mins.

L	A	S	S		R	A	T		N	.	C	E
A	C	N	E		A	R	R		E	M	M	A
O	L	I	N		M	E	A		A	J	A	R
S	U	P	E	R	B		I	N	T	O		
			G	O	O	D	L	O	O	K	E	R
U	R	B	A	N		O	E	D			T	E
R	O	L	L		S	I	H		A	N	I	S
A	M	O		H	E	N		P	L	G	E	T
L	O	O	K	E	D	G	O	O	D			
		P	A	P	A		P	O	I	N	T	S
S	E	E	P		R	E	A		T	A	R	A
P	E	R	U		I	L	L		E	T	A	L
F	E	S	T		S	O	S		D	E	P	T

Yesterday's answer 3-26



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Keira Knightley, 36; Keith Diamond, 59; Martin Short, 71; Steven Tyler, 73.

Happy Birthday: Make adjustments to the way you work or how you earn your living. Strive for efficiency, and it will buy you time to work on projects that excite you. Put together a schedule focused on health, fitness, personal growth and being the best you can be. Let your intuition guide you in a direction that offers peace of mind. Your numbers are 6, 10, 22, 26, 33, 38, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Finish what you start before moving on to something more enjoyable. Choose your words wisely when dealing with a friend or relative. An argument will ruin a perfect day if you choose discord over peace and love. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Make a change because you want to, not because you are emotional or angry at someone. Look for a positive way to make your home more comfortable and your relationship with someone special better. A positive attitude will bring the best results. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Tempers will surface if you spend too much time with someone who is critical or if you focus on what's not working instead of what you can accomplish. The decisions you make will determine the outcome. Personal growth is encouraged. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take note of what others are doing, and consider what you can do to improve your life. A chance to do things differently will help you stand out. Update documents, and you'll find a loophole that will save money. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Pay more attention to what you are doing and how you present yourself and less to what others are doing. It's better to look for opportunities by yourself than to try to make what someone else is doing work for you. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Let your feelings dictate what you decide to do. If you follow your heart, you will discover the best way to use your skills to reach your objective. Refuse to let anyone goad you into an argument. Maintain integrity and discretion. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Look for safe ways to get out and enjoy the fresh air. Spending time in nature will encourage you to live a healthy lifestyle. Get into a routine that offers exercise, a proper diet and spending quality time with someone you love. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll get a chance to change your environment, but don't go overboard financially. You want to lower your stress, not escalate your troubles and worries. Look at ways to cut corners, and it will help you stay within budget. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Monitor what others do or say. Someone will misinterpret what you say if you aren't articulate. Leave nothing to chance, and you'll outdo anyone who tries to come between you and what you are working so hard to achieve. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take a different approach to the way you handle money, and you'll find a way to save. A post that interests you will cause you to question your relationship with someone. Go directly to the source if you want the truth. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Clear a workout space and get moving. Fitness and exercise will give you the boost you need to start new projects. Give your home a facelift, and host a virtual gathering with your friends or relatives. Spend time doing, not contemplating. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* An emotional situation will be eye-opening. Don't get upset when something goes wrong; use your anger to motivate you to change. Your happiness depends on the decisions you make. Let go of the past; do what's best for you. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are systematic, insightful and unique. You are helpful and kind.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

9	8							
			5		6			
2		6		1		8		
	6				8			
	5		2			3		
	3				5			
	8		1		7			6
	2		9					
					9			7

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/26

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	8	5	9	1	3	2	7	6
1	6	9	7	8	2	3	5	4
3	2	7	6	4	5	9	8	1
6	3	4	8	5	9	1	2	7
2	7	1	3	6	4	5	9	8
9	5	8	2	7	1	6	4	3
5	1	6	4	9	7	8	3	2
8	4	3	5	2	6	7	1	9
7	9	2	1	3	8	4	6	5

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

CHIROPODISTS — Solution: 5 letters

P	E	N	O	I	T	C	E	F	N	I	L	E	G	S
C	O	B	N	O	I	S	E	L	N	O	D	N	E	T
L	R	D	I	N	S	F	A	S	C	I	I	T	I	S
I	E	E	I	R	W	I	C	A	E	L	K	N	A	W
G	L	L	D	A	C	I	L	S	P	O	R	T	U	G
A	C	S	R	E	T	S	I	L	B	W	O	E	E	B
M	S	T	P	E	N	R	E	Y	R	F	G	R	U	S
E	U	S	B	S	T	T	I	R	S	R	I	A	P	S
N	M	A	E	R	E	P	I	S	P	A	P	R	M	Y
T	I	R	E	S	A	L	L	A	T	T	A	C	A	M
D	T	S	E	T	S	S	L	R	L	I	I	H	N	P
F	N	N	I	T	R	M	I	I	N	S	N	A	A	T
I	O	E	I	U	U	C	E	S	H	E	E	L	G	O
B	N	O	P	O	B	S	E	N	I	C	I	D	E	M
T	L	S	T	G	J	E	C	I	T	C	A	R	P	S

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Achilles, Ankle, Arch, Assessment, Blisters, Bones, Bunion, Bursa, Clinic, Credentials, Diabetics, Fasciitis, Foot, Gait, Geriatric, Gout, Heel, Infection, Insert, Joint, Laser, Legs, Lesion, Ligament, Local, Lower, Manage, Medicines, Muscle, Pain, Patient, Podiatrist, Practice, Prescribe, Special, Sport, Sprains, Spurs, Surgery, Symptoms, Tendon, Toes, Wart

Yesterday's Answer: FaceTime

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

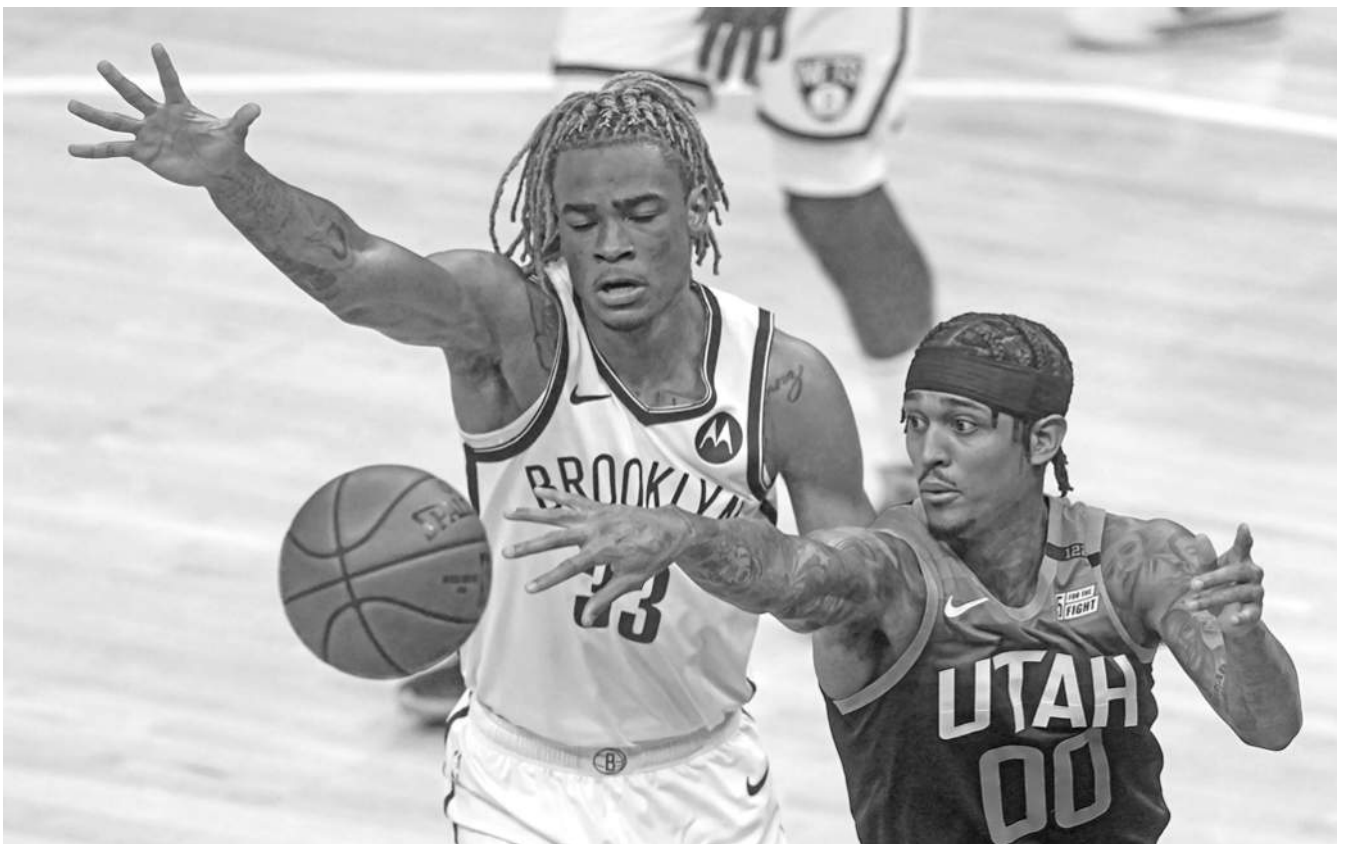
Donovan Mitchell, NBA-leading Jazz beat short-handed Nets

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Donovan Mitchell scored 27 points and the NBA-leading Utah Jazz routed the short-handed Brooklyn Nets 118-88 on Wednesday night.

Bojan Bogdanovic broke out of a 3-for-25 3-point shooting slump to made 4 of 6 and score 18 points for the Jazz. They have won four of five.

The matchup was a mismatch after the Nets scratched James Harden because of a sore neck. He joined star teammates Kevin Durant (left hamstring strain) and Kyrie Irving (personal reasons) on the injured list.

Alize Johnson, who was signed to a 10-day contract Monday, had a career-high 23 points and 15 rebounds for Brooklyn.



AP

Utah Jazz guard Jordan Clarkson (00) passes the ball as Brooklyn Nets forward Nicolas Claxton (33) defends in the first half during an NBA basketball game Wednesday, March 24, 2021, in Salt Lake City.

Bucks 121, Celtics 119

In Milwaukee, Khris Middleton had 27 points and 13 rebounds and Milwaukee held off Boston for its eighth consecutive victory.

Milwaukee led by 25, but only secured the win when Boston's Daniel Theis missed a wide-open corner 3-point attempt in the final seconds. The Bucks have won 13 of their last 14 games— stretch that started after a five-game skid.

After trailing 90-65 midway through the third quarter, the Celtics cut the margin to two on Jaylen Brown's 3-pointer with 1:32 left. Theis then drew an offensive foul on Giannis Antetokounmpo, and the Celtics had multiple opportunities to tie the game or go in front the rest of the way.

Marcus Smart missed a 3-pointer with just over a minute left. Donte DiVincenzo blocked a shot attempt from Kemba Walker with about 35 seconds remaining. Brook Lopez blocked a Smart shot attempt from around the basket with 2 seconds left.

Middleton knocked Smart's ensuing inbounds pass out of bounds, giving the Celtics one last opportunity. Smart found Theis all alone in front of the Celtics' bench, but the shot bounced off the rim as the buzzer sounded.

Antetokounmpo scored 13 points—his second-lowest total of the season—but also had eight rebounds and seven assists. Brown led Boston with 24 points.

Magic 112, Suns 111

In Orlando, Fla., Evan Fournier scored the last of his 21 points on a driving layup over Phoenix center Deandre Ayton with 6.4 seconds left and Orlando beat the Suns.

Suns star Devin Booker made two free throws with 19.4 seconds left to give Phoenix a one-point lead, but missed a reverse layup attempt just before the horn. The loss ended Phoenix's road winning streak at seven, its longest since 2006-07.

Nikola Vucevic had 27 points and 14 rebounds for Orlando, and rookie Chuma Okeke made all six of his shots en route to a career-best 17 points.

Booker finished with 25 points, seven rebounds and seven assists. Chris Paul scored eight of his 23 points in the fourth quarter.

Clippers 134, Spurs 101

In San Antonio, Former Spurs star Kawhi Leonard had 25 points and Los Angeles never trailed in beating San Antonio.

Spurs fans still have not forgiven Leonard for his trade demand and subsequent departure to Toronto following his injury-riddled 2018 season. He was booed during pregame introductions and subsequently each time he touched the ball.

Marcus Morris added 20 points, Paul George had 17 points, and Lou Williams 16. DeMar DeRozan led San Antonio with 19 points, and Patty Mills added 16.

The teams will meet again Thursday night in the finale of the two-game set in San Antonio.

Raptors 135, Nuggets 111

In Tampa, Fla., Pascal Siakam scored 27 points and Toronto routed Denver to end a nine-game losing streak.

Toronto built a 24-point lead in the first half and shot 50% (24 of 48) on 3-pointers overall to win for the first time since Feb. 26.

Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray scored 20 points apiece for Denver.

Pacers 116, Pistons 111

In Indianapolis, Caris LeVert scored 28 points and Indiana beat Detroit to snap a six-game home losing streak.

LeVert surpassed 20 points in seven starts with the Pacers since being acquired in a three-team trade. Edmond Sumner added 18 points, and Malcolm Brogden had 16.

Jerami Grant led East-worst Detroit with 29 points.

Kings 110, Hawks 108

In Sacramento, Calif., De'Aaron Fox scored 37 points, Tyrese Haliburton made two free throws with 36.6 seconds remaining and Sacramento beat Atlanta.

Haliburton had 17 points and seven assists, Buddy Hield scored 14 points, and Richaun Holmes had 16 points and eight rebounds.

Clint Capella had 25 points and 17 rebounds for the Hawks. They have have lost back-to-back games after winning their first eight under interim coach Nate McMillan.

Cavaliers 103, Bulls 94

In Chicago, Darius Garland had 22 points and nine assists, Jarrett Allen added 19 points and nine rebounds, and Cleveland beat Chicago without scoring leader Collin Sexton.

Sexton sat out after he experienced right hamstring soreness in the morning shootaround. Coach J.B. Bickerstaff said the injury wasn't serious.

Zach LaVine led Chicago with 22 points.

Hornets 122, Rockets 97

In Houston, Terry Rozier scored 25 points, Devonte' Graham added 21 and Charlotte beat Houston.

The Rockets quickly returned to the loss column after snapping a 20-game losing streak Monday night. It was the NBA's longest skid since Philadelphia's record-setting 28-game rut across the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons.

Charlotte won in Houston for the first time since Dec. 22, 2004.

John Wall had 20 points and seven assists for Houston.

Grizzlies 116, Thunder 107

In Oklahoma City, Dillon Brooks matched a season high with 25 points and Memphis beat Oklahoma City.

Grayson Allen scored 20 points, and Jonas Valanciunas added 16 points and 15 rebounds for the Grizzlies. They have won four of five to move a game above .500.

Moses Brown had 19 points and 12 rebounds for the Thunder.

Mavericks 128, Timberwolves 108

In Minneapolis, Kristaps Porzingis had 29 points to help Dallas rout Minnesota.

Tim Hardaway Jr. added 21 points. and Luka Doncic finished with 15.

Rookie guard Anthony Edwards led Minnesota with 29 points.

Mexico beats US 1-0 in men's Olympic soccer qualifying

Sebastian Soto's sloppy giveaway cost the United States in a 1-0 loss to Mexico.

Now comes the winner-take-all semifinal Sunday night against Honduras or Canada for a trip to the men's Olympic soccer tournament.

"Ultimately difficult to lose the game on an individual error," U.S. coach Jason Kreis said after Soto gifted Uriel Antuna a 45th-minute goal at Guadalajara on Wednesday night. "The most important game is coming, so we need to move forward very quickly and prepare ourselves for that."

Both the U.S. and Mexico were assured of advancing from Group A to semifinal berths. The U.S. finished Group A in second place at 2-1 and will play Honduras, unless Canada beats the Catrachos in Thursday's finale of Group B, which also includes El Salvador and Haiti.

Mexico, the 2012 Olympic champion, won its 14th straight Olympic qualifier dating to 2008 and finished first in Group A at 3-0.

Semifinal winners from the North and Central American and Caribbean region get the final two places in the 16-nation field for the Olympics, to be played from July 21 to Aug. 7 in Tokyo, Kashima, Miyagi, Saitama, Sapporo and Yokohama.

"We wanted to win the game to be at the top of our group," American defender Mauricio Pineda said. "We came short of that, but we're still in the semifinal, and I think we're going to have to flip the page quick."

Antuna, a 23-year-old Chivas winger who spent 2019 on loan to the LA Galaxy from Manchester City, picked up a loose ball about 35 yards from goal that Soto mis-hit a casual back-pass following a feed upfield from Henry Kessler. Antuna took several touches to keep space from Kessler and Pineda as he cut to the edge of the arc, then beat goalkeeper David Ochoa with a right-footed shot for his second goal of the tournament.

"It's a game of small details and getting all those right, and against the best teams you're going to get punished if you make even the smallest of mistakes," Pineda said. "So today we were punished for that, and I think we have to start punishing teams on the other side of the field, as well."

Kreis faulted Soto's decision-making.

"Ultimately the goal came from their press: a forward that dropped down and instead of controlling the ball and taking two touches," the coach said. "He had all kinds of time. He tried to play a first-time pass and got intercepted."

The U.S. men failed to qualify for the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, a trend that was followed by the failure of the senior national team to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

Clubs do not have to release players for Olympic qualifying or the Olympics, denying most of the best-known players from tournament teams

Because of the delay caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic, FIFA kept eligibility to players born Jan. 1, 2007, or later. Each Olympic team can use three wild-card players over the age limit.

Kreis made six changes to his starting lineup for the second straight match, giving Kessler at central defense and Soto at forward their first starts and reinserting Ochoa, outside back Andres Herrera, and midfielders Hassani Dotson and Djordje Mihailovic, who started the opening 1-0 win over Costa Rica.

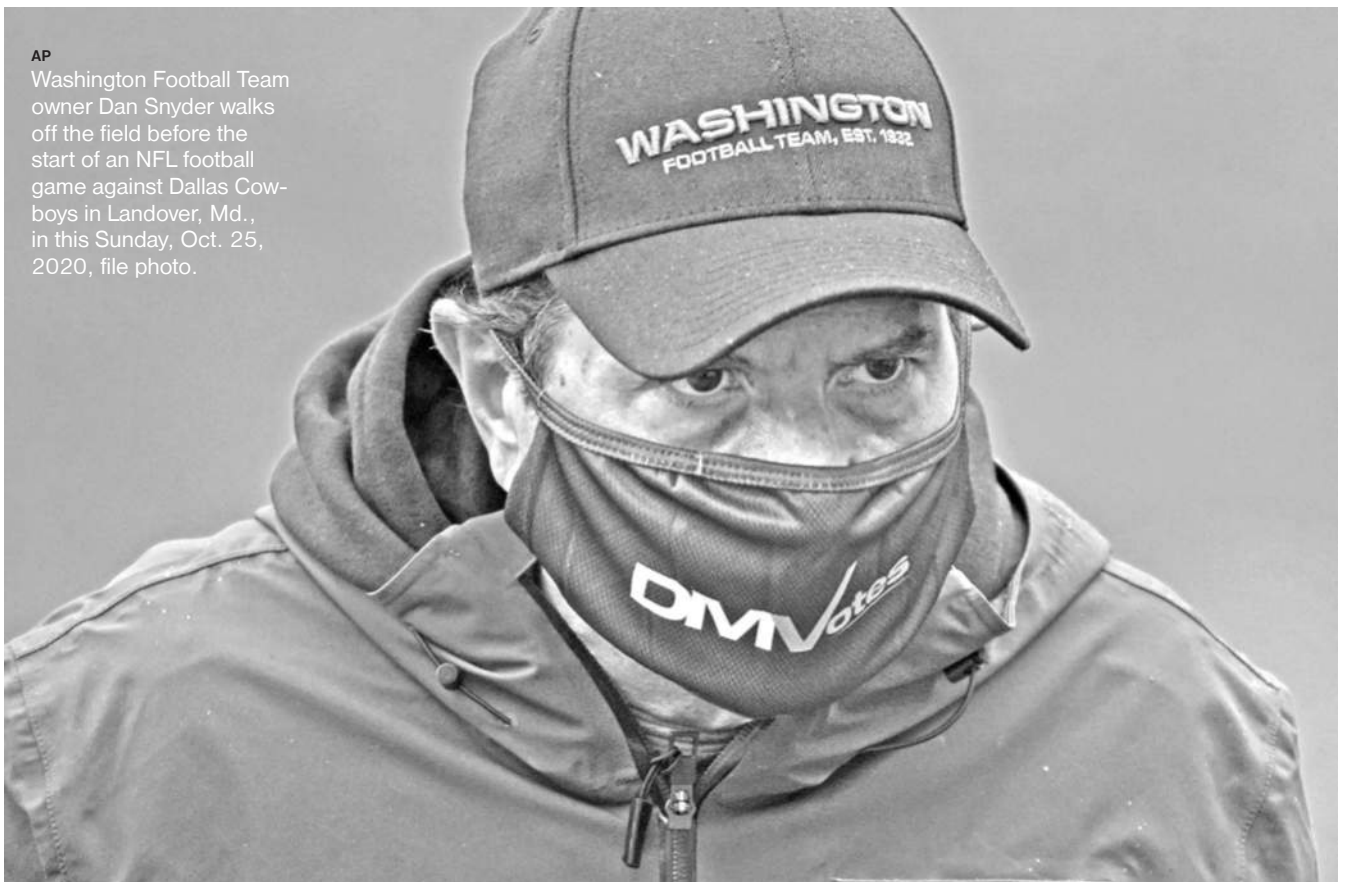
Outside back Julian Araujo, Pineda in central defense, and midfielders Andrés Perea, Johnny Cardoso and Sebastian Saucedo also started the 4-0 victory over the Dominican Republic.

Kreis made a triple substitution in the 61st minute, inserting Jackson Yueill, Jonathan Lewis and Jesús Ferreira, who carried a yellow card from the opener. Taylor Tessman entered in the 76th for Dotson, who appeared to turn his left ankle. Dotson scored twice against the Dominicans.

"We saw really bright spots," Kreis said. "I think we also saw spots where we were like, wow, these guys are still rusty and still making mistakes that you don't typically see them make in passes and movements." ***(AP)***

Snyder to buy out other Washington owners, pending approval

By STEPHEN WHYNO
AP SPORTS WRITER



AP
Washington Football Team owner Dan Snyder walks off the field before the start of an NFL football game against Dallas Cowboys in Landover, Md., in this Sunday, Oct. 25, 2020, file photo.

Dan Snyder will soon be the sole owner of the Washington Football Team.

Snyder is buying out the team's minority owners in a move that gives him total control and should end a lengthy, bitter court dispute along with any speculation that he'd be pushed to sell his boyhood team he bought in 1999.

An NFL spokesman on Wednesday confirmed that Snyder's application for a debt waiver of $450 million was approved by the league's finance committee and that the deal is pending approval from team owners. Three-quarters, or 24 of 32 teams, need to sign off during a vote at the annual league meeting next week to make it official.

Multiple messages seeking comment that were left for the team, a public relations firm representing Snyder and lawyers representing the minority owners were not immediately returned.

Fred Smith, Dwight Schar and Bob Rothman currently own 40.5% of Washington Football Inc. They sued Snyder in federal court in Maryland in November, seeking an injunction to allow them to sell their shares of the team.

This effectively settles that matter and puts Snyder completely in charge of the team, which Forbes most recently valued at $3.5 billion. Washington is in the midst of an organizational upheaval after dropping its name last year and launching an independent investigation into allegations of sexual harassment in the workplace by several former employees.

The NFL took over that investigation run by Washington-based lawyer Beth Wilkinson last summer. A league spokesman said that investigation is still ongoing, which is separate from Snyder buying out full control of the team.

Amid the allegations was a report that Snyder himself was involved, which he denied. Snyder separately vowed to change the "culture" around the organization and at the Super Bowl earned some support from Commissioner Roger Goodell for initiatives he and wife Tanya have already taken.

"The Washington football club has made a lot of changes already," Goodell said. "They asked for this type of review, they asked for the recommendations on this, and Dan and Tanya have already begun making those changes for the football club. It's good to see that."

Those changes include hiring Jason Wright, the league's first Black team president, and revamping gameday presentation. Petra Pope was hired to run a new dance team, which will replace cheerleaders. A new name—or making "Washington Football Team" permanent—is expected in time for the 2022 season.

There is precedent in the NFL of ownership changing hands in light of serious allegations: Jerry Richardson sold the Carolina Panthers in 2018 after coming under investigation from the league for sexual and racial misconduct in the workplace.

The Washington Post reported a former cheerleader saying Snyder invited her to a hotel room with one of his friends, and that longtime team executive Larry Michael made extra cheerleading videos for the owner showing sensitive material that wasn't made public. Snyder released a statement in August denying those specific allegations and saying he was unaware of the incidents until now.

"I want to unequivocally state that this never happened," Snyder said at the time of the report he invited a cheerleader to a hotel room in 2004. "Furthermore, I do not have any knowledge of the 10-year-old videos referenced in the story. I did not request their creation, and I never saw them."

Lower cap leads to more cuts than usual in NFL

If it seemed as if NFL teams have been shedding contracts nearly as fast as signing them in recent weeks that's because it's almost true.

With a shrinking salary cap in a sport with few contracts that are fully guaranteed, teams have spent the weeks leading up to free agency and the first few days of the new league year getting out of deals signed in recent years when there was more money available to spend.

Whether it was Kansas City getting rid of banged-up and expensive starting offensive tackles Mitchell Schwartz and Eric Fisher, the Raiders cutting ties with Lamarcus Joyner and Tyrell Williams after building their free agent class around them, or Tennessee shedding starting defensive backs Adoree Jackson, Malcolm Butler and Kenny Vaccaro, veterans around the league have been sent to the chopping block.

In all, according to transactions data from SportRadar and contract information from Spotrac and Over The Cap, teams have released players with a combined total of approximately $600 million left on the deals they originally signed between the Super Bowl and the end of the first week of the league year. That figure excludes players who were on rookie or minimum level deals.

The cuts have come after the salary cap was reduced from $198.2 million in 2020 to $182.5 million in 2021 in response to the reduced revenues resulting from mostly empty stadiums last year because of the coronavirus.

The bloodletting could have been even more severe had the league and the NFLPA not agreed to spread those losses over multiple years.

"I think the unprecedented part being, for the first time in modern era, the cap decreases instead of increases," Rams general manager Les Snead said. "But again, I think many people on this planet, not just us in NFL football, have had to make sacrifices, some probably harder than others over the past year."

Cutting high-salaried players is nothing new in the NFL where most free agent contracts have teams often committing to paying lucrative signing bonuses and guaranteed money in the first couple of years of a deal and then deciding whether to keep the player or get rid of him to create salary cap room.

But the rate of it increased substantially this season because of the lowered cap with the total amount of contracts cut in the same time period equaling about $445 million in 2020 and $227 million in 2019.

One of the teams in a cutting mode was the Raiders. Coach Jon Gruden bragged in 2019 about the free agent haul he brought in after trading away stars Khalil Mack and Amari Cooper instead of giving them big extensions.

He said at the owners meeting that year that the Raiders wouldn't have been able to get players such as Antonio Brown, Trent Brown, Williams and Joyner without those deals.

Antonio Brown didn't even last with the team until the opener that season because of run-ins with general manager Mike Mayock and frustration over the type of helmet the league made him wear.

The other three all were sent packing this offseason with Trent Brown traded to New England as part of a 2022 pick swap with two years left on his $66 million, four-year contract, and Williams and Joyner cut this offseason with more than $38 million remaining on their contracts.

The Raiders also cut guard Richie Incognito and brought him back on a cheaper deal, and traded away starting offensive linemen Rodney Hudson and Gabe Jackson for mid-round picks when they refused to take pay cuts.

None of that was part of the original plan.

"If you go back two years and say where was the cap going to be this coming season, the answer would have been plus or minus $225 million," Mayock said. "We're looking at ($182.5 million). It's simple math."

Some players have come out of the situation more than whole. Adoree Jackson got a three-year deal worth a reported $39 million from the Giants after Tennessee refused to pay his $10.24 million fifth-year option.

Guard Kevin Zeitler got cut with $12 million left on his contract with the Giants and promptly signed a three-year, $22.5 million deal with Baltimore that pays him $10 million this season and guarantees him $16 million.

In one of the more curious cases, Miami cut Kyle Van Noy one year into his four-year, $51 million deal, leaving about $36 million unpaid. Van Noy then returned to New England on a two-year, $12 million deal and the Patriots will also get a fourth-round compensation pick in next month's draft based on the deal Van Noy signed last March.

Others such as receivers Alshon Jeffery and Adam Humphries are still looking for work after their contracts were wiped out and will be lucky to get similar deals now that they are back on the market. ***(AP)***

Source: Suh to remain with Bucs on 1-year, $9M deal

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Defensive lineman Ndamukong Suh has agreed to a one-year contract worth $9 million to remain with the Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Wednesday because the agreement, as well as a salary-cap friendly extension given to offensive lineman Donovan Smith, had not been announced by the Bucs.

Smith, who was to earn $14.25 million in 2021, agreed to a two-year, $31 million extension that frees space under the salary cap as general manager Jason Licht continues the team's effort to keep as much of a championship roster together as possible.

The left tackle, who including playoffs started 19 of 20 games last season, joins Tom Brady in negotiating extensions that improve the prospects of keeping several high-profile players from leaving the team via free agency.

It's the third straight winter Suh has agreed to a one-year deal with the Bucs, who've led the NFL in run defense each of the past two seasons. He earned $10 million in 2019 and $8.5 million in 2020.

The 34-year-old who was the No. 2 overall pick in the 2010 draft had six sacks last year, hiking his career total to 64½ in 11 seasons with the Bucs, Detroit Lions, Miami Dolphins and Los Angeles Rams. He had 1½ sacks in the Super Bowl, helping Tampa Bay slow down Patrick Mahomes during a 31-9 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs.

Suh's deal ensures all 11 starters on defense will be under contract for next season. Linebackers Shaquil Barrett and Lavonte David signed new contracts rather than test free agency, and reserves Rakeem Nunez-Roches and Kevin Minter are staying, too.

The Bucs launched their busy offseason by placing the franchise tag on wide receiver Chris Godwin. Tight end Rob Gronkowski and kicker Ryan Succop also agreed to return, and that leaves receiver Antonio Brown and running back Leonard Fournette as big-name free agents Licht is seeking to retain.

Brown and Fournette both played for Tampa Bay on one-year deals in 2020.

Kuroda wins March Underground Race

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Shuji Kuroda bested over 40 individuals, submitting the fastest run time during the March Saipan 5K Underground Race held last week in Marpi.

Kuroda, a Food and Beverage assistant manager at Grandvrio Saipan, completed the 5K race with an impressive time of 19:18.

Completing the race just a little over two minutes after Kuroda was Kuu Nishimura who submitted a time of 21:44.

Rounding up the Top 3 was Sam Culp who came in at a close third with a time of 22:20.

According to Edward Jr. Dela Cruz, event organizer, the 5K Underground Race provides a fun challenge for the community to look forward to every year at no cost.

"It is to get people to go out and be active and promote cardiovascular activity. I didn't make it purely competitive. We will honor the Top 3 fastest times but other than that, there are no categories," he said.

Dela Cruz said he was inspired by the Saipan International School's Run the Marianas event and that was the goal for the Underground Race.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Kuroda was chosen as Northern Marianas Sports Association's Male Athlete of the month after he took first in the 6th Saipan Aquathlon 5km run, 1km Swim, and 2.5km Run held last Feb. 27 at Pau Pau Beach.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Over 40 individuals participate in the March Saipan 5K Underground Race held last week in Marpi.

Kuroda continuous to train and dedicate himself to various sporting events across the CNMI. Kuroda is known for his friendly, respectful, and courteous personality.

SHIRLEY'S

From Page 24

behind Khristelle Itaas' two goals with help from Ericka Santiago who pitched in one goal.

Kanoa currently holds the No. 2 spot in the overall standings in Division A with a win-loss record of 2-4.

DIVISION B
Southern United 7, MP United 1

Southern United coasted past MP United with Megan Elayda leading the way with her three goals with help from Keisha Deleon Guerrero and Erin Frink who pitched in two goals apiece.

Southern United bagged their second win of the season after defeating MP United to bring them up to No. 3 on the standings of Division B.

MASTERS
Paire Team 2 1, Matansa 1

Matansa took the lead in the 7th minute behind Bunruang Brasuell who scored the team's lone goal.

Paire 2's Rhonda Gross brought the game to a draw in the 28th minute behind her goal. Paire 2 remains Top 2 in the Masters Division following its matchup with Matansa last Saturday.

TanHoldings 3, KANOA 0

TanHoldings eased past Kanoa behind Yoko Borja who scored two of the team's winning goals with help from Eunnie Benavente who chipped in one.

Lions Club to host bike race on April 25

Saipan Unity Lions Club will hold its 5th Mountain and Road Bike Race Event on April 25, 2021.

The race will have two courses—a long course for non-beginners and a short course for beginners.

The 35-kilometer long course will start at Banzai Cliff before proceeding to Suicide Cliff, Bird Island Lookout, the Grotto before returning to Banzai Cliff.

The shorter course is 20 kilometers and will have its starting line at Mobil Tanapag before proceeding to Bird Island Lookout and then to Banzai Cliff before reverting back to Mobil Tanapag for the finish line.

The mountain bike and road race each have two divisions—men and women—and the Top 3 for each category will get medals. Registration fee is $20 for early bird registrants between March 23 and April 17 and $25 for registrations made from April 18 to 24, 2021. The race fee includes a free T-shirt and payments can be made through PayPal.

Saipan Unity Lions Club said proceeds from the 5th Mountain and Road Bike Race Event will go to its various community service programs.

For more information, call Willy Barbo at 287-8216 or visit this website https://www.webscorer.com/register?raceid=236418.

Torch relay for Tokyo Olympics kicks off its 121-day journe

TOKYO (AP)—The torch relay for the postponed Tokyo Olympics began its 121-day journey across Japan on Thursday and is headed toward the opening ceremony in Tokyo on July 23.

The relay began in northeastern Fukushima prefecture, the area that was devastated by the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and the meltdown of three nuclear reactors. About 18,000 died in the tragedy,

The first runner with the torch was Azusa Iwashimizu, a key player in the Japan team that won the Women's World Cup in 2011.

Wearing a white track suit, she carried the torch out of the J-Village indoor soccer training center and was surrounded by 14 other members of that 2011 World Cup squad and coach Norio Sasaki at the rear. They were also decked out in white track suits.

The ceremony was closed to the public because of the fear of spreading COVID-19 but was streamed live.

"The torch of Tokyo 2020 will become a bright light for hope for Japanese citizens and citizens in the world and a light at the end of the tunnel," said Seiko Hashimoto, the president of the local organizing committee and a former Olympian herself.

Homare Sawa, the biggest star on the 2011 team, missed the ceremony. She is being treated for a condition affecting her inner ear and had to withdraw from the event.

Fans were told to social-distance along the roadside as the torch passes, and they were to refrain from loud cheering. Organizers have said they will stop or reroute the relay if crowding becomes a problem during the four-month parade.

Spectators cooperated in Naraha Town, just down the road from where the torch started its trip. A few hundred people stood on the roadside and were safely spread out.

"At first I didn't think much of it," said 20-year-old Takumu Kimura. "But when I actually saw it, it felt like: — yes, it's the Olympics."

Setsuko Hashimoto, a 63-year-old local resident, was emotional as the torch passed.

"Ten years ago there was a nuclear accident so (seeing the torch) it felt like I could really look forward to something and live," she said. "When you become my age, this is the last Tokyo Olympics and it's here. It was very touching."

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga chimed in from Tokyo with a statement.

"The Olympic torch relay starting from today is a valuable opportunity for the people to get a real sense of the Olympics and Paralympics that are approaching," Suga told reporters.

Local organizers and the International Olympic Committee hope the relay will turn public opinion in Japan in favor of the Olympics. Sentiments expressed in polls in Japan so far are overwhelmingly negative with about 80% suggesting another delay or cancellation.

The relay and the Olympics both stir fear that the events could spread the virus. There is also opposition to the soaring cost of staging the Olympics, now put officially at $15.4 billion. Several audits suggest it's twice that much and a University of Oxford study says these are the most expensive Olympics on record.

The relay is a big test for the upcoming Olympics with fear among the public that the event could spread the virus to rural and more isolated parts of the country. Vaccinations have not been rolled out yet in Japan to the general public. About 9,000 deaths in the country have been attributed to COVID-19.

About 10,000 runners are expected to take part, with the relay touching Japan's 47 prefectures.

After the postponement a year ago, there was early talk of eliminating the relay to save money. However, that idea was quickly dropped with the relay heavily sponsored by Coca-Cola and Toyota.

The relay is a prelude to the difficulties the Olympics and Paralympics will present with 15,400 athletes entering Japan, along with thousands of other officials, judges, VIPs, media, and broadcasters.

Athletes will be kept in a "bubble" like atmosphere in Tokyo and will be limited to the Athletes Village on Tokyo Bay, the competition venues and training areas. Most others will be outside the bubble and will be kept at a distance from the athletes.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

DOVE SPRING WOMEN'S LEAGUE STANDINGS

DIVISION A

CLUB	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Shirley's FC	4	4	0	0	20	8	12	12
Kanoa FC	4	2	1	1	14	10	4	7
Southern United	4	1	1	2	19	14	5	4
Tan Holdings FC	4	0	0	4	6	27	(21)	0

DIVISION B

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Shirley's FC	3	3	0	0	14	5	9	9
Tan Holdings FC	4	2	1	1	9	8	1	7
Southern United FC	3	2	0	1	12	7	5	6
MPU FC	4	1	1	2	5	14	(9)	4
Kanoa FC	3	0	0	3	4	8	(4)	0

MASTERS DIVISION

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Paire FC - Team 1	3	3	0	0	8	3	5	9
Paire FC - Team 2	3	2	1	0	6	2	4	7
Matansa FC	3	1	1	1	6	4	2	4
Tan Holdings FC	3	1	0	2	5	8	(3)	3
Kanoa FC	4	0	0	4	0	11	(11)	0

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	31	13	.705	—
Milwaukee	29	14	.674	1½
Brooklyn	30	15	.667	1½
Charlotte	22	21	.512	8½
Miami	22	22	.500	9
New York	22	22	.500	9
Atlanta	22	22	.500	9
Boston	21	23	.477	10
Indiana	20	23	.465	10½
Chicago	19	24	.442	11½
Toronto	18	26	.409	13
Cleveland	17	27	.386	14
Washington	15	27	.357	15
Orlando	15	29	.341	16
Detroit	12	31	.279	18½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	32	11	.744	—
Phoenix	29	14	.674	3
L.A. Clippers	29	16	.644	4
L.A. Lakers	28	16	.636	4½
Denver	26	18	.591	6½
Portland	25	18	.581	7
Dallas	23	19	.548	8½
San Antonio	22	19	.537	9
Memphis	21	20	.512	10
Golden State	22	22	.500	10½
New Orleans	19	24	.442	13
Sacramento	19	25	.432	13½
Oklahoma City	19	25	.432	13½
Houston	12	31	.279	20
Minnesota	10	34	.227	22½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Donovan Mitchell, NBA-leading Jazz beat short-handed Nets

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Shirley's stays on top of Dove league

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Shirley's Football Club remains unscathed after vanquishing separate foes last Sunday in the A and B divisions of the 2021 Dove Spring Women's League at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

In Division A, Shirley's FC edged Southern United FC, 3-1, to gain their fourth victory of the season.

Katrina Costales took the lead for Shirley's in the 9th minute with a follow-up goal from Fiona Bucalig in the 22nd minute.

Southern United tried to catch up behind Britany Wally who brought the score to 1-2 in the 38th minute, but Jerlyn Castillo widened the gap in favor of Shirley's FC in the 48th minute.

Shirley's FC eked past TanHoldings, 5-3, in their Division B match to bag their third win of the season.

Jeraldine Castillo towed Shirley's FC to victory with her three goals and was backed up by Alexandria Vergara and Marrielle Gariguez with one goal apiece.

TanHoldings held the lead in the first eight minutes behind Julie Ann Capayas who landed the first goal in the 1st minute.

Castillo took the lead in the 9th minute after landing her two goals just 50 seconds apart.

The match came to a head in the 10th minute when TanHoldings' Sydney Hind hit the back of the net followed by a goal from Fiona Regan to completely turn the tables in their favor in the 21st minute gaining a 1-point advantage over Shirley's, 3-2.

Vergara, in a last-ditch effort to retake the lead, brought the game to another draw in the 26th minute and a follow-up goal from Gariguez in the 36th minute took the lead back for the team. Castillo landed one last goal in the 47th minute, ending the game with a 2-goal advantage over TanHoldings.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shirley's Football Club remains unscathed in divisions A and B of the 2021 Dove Spring Women's League held at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Sunday.

DIVISION A
Kanoa FC 3, TanHoldings 2

Kanoa nipped TanHoldings

See SHIRLEY'S on Page 23

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TanHoldings edged Kanoa in their matchup of the Masters Division during the 2021 Dove Spring Women's League held at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Sunday.

Camacho, Borja tighten grip on division leads

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Michael Camacho and Theresa Borja garnered perfect scores in their respective classes during the third leg of the Marianas Racing Association's 2021 Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Raceway Park in Marpi.

Camacho and Borja, who have held the series lead from the start by coasting past foes in the past three rounds, are adamant about extending their reign.

Camacho placed first in both heats of the race in the Mini 2 Class, for the third time in a row, to gain 50 points bumping his overall score to 150.

Following Camacho is Ethan Yumul, who consistently held second place throughout the series, gained another 44 points after placing second in both heats last Sunday to bring his score up to 132.

Completing the Top 3 is Mariana Alvarez, with a consistent third place streak, who gained 40 points after placing third in both heats of last Saturday's race to bring her overall score to 120.

In the Mini ATV Class, Borja also held first place throughout the last three rounds giving her an overall score of 150.

Just below Borja is Jesus Santos who holds an overall score of 130 points. Santos gained an additional 44 points in last Saturday's series after placing second in both heats.

Rounding up the Top 3 in the Mini ATV Class is Melvin Reyes with a score of 116. Reyes placed third in both heats of the third leg of the series to gain an additional 40 points.

Devin Yumul still dominates the Mini 1 Class despite losing momentum in the third leg of the series. Yumul gained 47 points to bump his overall score up to 147.

Harley Susulin remains Top 2 with an overall score of 122, but third place Leighton Palacios is closing in on Susulin with an overall score of 120. Palacios took second in the third leg last Saturday to bump her score to 120.

Nanako Celis still holds the reins in the Powerpuff Class with 39 points, followed by Billie Pangelinan at a close second with 134 points. Completing the Top 3 is Shaniah Alvarez with an overall score 115.

JOSEPH CHIN

Michael Camacho continues his win streak during the Marianas Racing Association's 2021 Point Series Race's third round held last Sunday at the Cowtown Raceway Park in Marpi.